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LEAVES FROM

LAKE LAND.

BY

JAMES PAYN.

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TO

HARRIET MARTINEAU,

A TRUE LOVER OF THE LAKE COUNTRY,

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

BY HER SINCERE FRIEND

JAMES PAYN.

PREFACE.

These papers are re-printed from *Chambers's Journal*, *Household Words*, *Titan*, and the *Dublin University Magazine*, with the kind permission of their respective proprietors.

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THE WISHING GATE,

A STORY OF GRASMERE.

It was rushbearing-time at Grasmere, in the north country—the last Saturday in July, the day whereon the earthen floors of our small churches have their carpeting renewed with rushes from Winandermere. There were two waggons full of them; and upon the horses' heads that drew them waved their feathery tops; and in the drivers' hats, like knightly plumes, they nodded; and upon the hats of each of the band that followed, playing *Annie Laurie*, they kept measure with the tune; and bound up gracefully with wreaths of wild-flowers, and carried by young girls, still came the long green rushes in procession. Where the twin rivers run into the Mere, they grow upon a bank of sand, and in the little bay beyond, under those moss-grown rocks whose heads are purple with the heather. This is a

great holiday with us at Grasmere; the shops — there are but two in the village — are shut, as though it were Sunday, and the church-bell is clanging: it is the same which tolls for service and knells for burials, but no one can mistake its tones to-day for anything but merriment. Every urchin in the place is having his pull at it, and, as many as can, together, so that it never gives two tinkles alike. To be carried up by it into the belfry, and so hit heads against the rafters, is rare fun. Our women-folk are employed for days upon these garlands, and every household strives that out of it shall be chosen the rushbearing queen.

“The fewer the ribbons the better, Phœbe,” was Dame Forrest’s advice to her daughter upon this occasion; and Phœbe—who was but seventeen, and likely to err upon the ribbon side—made a simple girdle of blue flowers round her rushes, and was proclaimed queen by acclamation. “Hail, beautiful Phœbe Forrest! hail, pretty queen of the Rushbearing!” It was the proudest moment of her young life, walking at the head of her subjects; as it was too, without question, that of her mother, whose eyes, however, were filled with tears; the proudest, too, of Leonard

Hird's, her lover, whose look never strays away from her, nor relaxes in its steadiness: one would think he was watching a deer in Martindale, lest it should creep out of rifle-range. A powerful young fellow, with a fine face, but for a little too much self-will about the mouth. He has the fleetest foot after a hill-fox in Westmorland, and is the king of the dalesmen hereabouts in the wrestling ring; and the fear of the men and the love of the women have spoiled him: he says he will marry Phœbe Forrest whether she will or no — and Phœbe says no — which seems a strange sort of wooing.

There was but one in Grasmere that summer-noon who had not yet acknowledged Phœbe his queen, and that was not for lack of love, nor loyalty neither. Frank Meredith, the landscape-painter, who lodged in the farmhouse on the hill — he was the rebel: he had been there for the last three years, until his portfolio was filled to overflowing, and scarcely a rock in Westmorland had escaped his canvas; but still he gave no signs of departure. The artist flood was now rolling over our beautiful valley for the fourth time since his arrival; but however pleasant his brethren —

and none loved good companionship better than he — no wave ever bore him with it further than the neighbouring dales. Certainly his home-view was so beautiful as not to be excelled elsewhere: the grassy mountain-side sloped down to river and woodland from his door, and Winandermere lay not so far beyond it, but that every snow-white sail upon its bosom could be seen. Two sycamores gave forth perpetual bee-music to the song of the dancing brook within his garden; and towering behind and above the farmhouse, crowded the whole mountain-world. Still there was something beyond the beauty of its landscape that, year after year, chained Frank Meredith to Grasmere — its gossips said. They had found out all about him before the second year was out: how that he was a black sheep, and had disgusted his noble family, and was allowed a pound a week, upon condition of keeping out of their way; but that was not Frank's history at all, nor anything like it. He was indeed of an ancient stock of painful respectability, and had shocked it a good deal by his inartificial behaviour. He was by nature vulgar, or at least had preferred landscape-painting to any gentlemanly profession; and having been intoxicated

with some slight success, pursued it; which was his relatives' account of the matter. And his uncle, indeed, from whom he should have inherited thousands and tens of thousands, and chariots and horses, did, we know, disinherit him for making negus of his particular sherry — "The fellow put hot water and sugar, sir, to my 38, at eighty-four shillings a dozen" — and the family, following suit to the rich uncle, washed their aristocratic hands of him, leaving the young artist to live as he could on a hundred a year of his own, and upon his cunning in water-colours.

On this same rushbearing night, he stands on the natural terrace that leads into Grasmere from High Crag, leaning upon the carved gate which opens into the quarry-field, and smoking his clay-pipe. He has not with him, wonderful to say, the instruments of his beloved art, for he has taken that same view from the Wishing-gate a thousand times. There are many spots in the north to which poetic legend has attached this "faculty of giving," and to none with a more harmonious fitness than to this at Grasmere. The good fairies never had a more lovely dwelling-place than that on which the perfect moon was

then out-pouring her silver treasure: the songs of the holiday-makers had not yet ceased, but came up from the valley beneath on a gentle wind, which set the clouds afloat over the mountain-sides, but could not bend the fir-trees on their crests: the lake lay sleeping with a quiet smile, like a maiden dreaming of love. It is of love, too, the painter dreams as his charmed eyes wander over the scene; his lips are parted with a smile too, as he whispers his wish across the gate. How many half-believers before him have done the same, in that same place! How the carved bar is cut along and across with the various desires of men! some of them in sober prose, and some in simple song, but all "of the earth, earthy."

"A woodbiney Cottage and Kowe" is, alas, the best of them. "£4000." is the limit of one ambitious mortal's wishes; and "A five pound note" contents another. "Carriage and Pair," exceedingly well cut, and with a flourish, must, we think, be a young lady's vision of bliss; and "Susan" as unmistakably a young gentleman's. "King at Caryl" is the most remarkable inscription, and would puzzle many to decipher; but Meredith, who is an excellent wrestler himself,

and well conversant with Westmorland aspirations, recognises at once the darling hope of some young athlete that he may win the champion's belt at the approaching meeting at Caryl (Carlisle). Frank Meredith smiles again and again at all these things, but, nevertheless, he draws forth his penknife, and begins to inscribe a little wish of his own heart. "P" — that has something to do with painting, or perhaps power: "PH" — that may possibly be the way in which an eccentric genius may spell fame: "PHŒBE FORREST!" — the note of admiration is our own — is what it at last came to!

"And here she is," said a sweet low voice as he finished the inscription, and the queen of the rushbearing was standing by his side. She had laid aside her sceptre, and taken the wreath of flowers from her hair, but looked no whit less lovely than before. Frank gazed at her an instant, as though she were indeed a supernatural visitant who had obeyed his call, and then convinced himself of her humanity by an embrace. He was very handsome, and, although still something too youthly in figure, he had a frame well knit and active. The two seemed in that time

and place, to be the fit inhabitants of some new Eden Garden.

"I could not come before," she said, "Frank, for Leonard made me dance with him three dances on the green there; and as it is, I fear he half suspects us" — A shrill scream concluded the sentence, as the huge form of the young dalesman strode in between the pair.

"I do suspect you, Phœbe, and I blush for you," he said. "Go you home to your mother, wench, at once; and for this young gentleman, I will take his chastisement into my own hands."

"Don't move a step, Phœbe!" exclaimed Frank. "By what right, man, do you dare interfere between her and me?"

"Because I am her cousin, Mr. Meredith, and shall be her husband. Because I would not have your blood upon my hands, which, as there is a God in heaven, would be there, if dishonour" —

"Silence, sir!" thundered Frank. "Go home, Phœbe. Nay," he added, as he saw her hesitate to leave such angry folk together, "we are not going to fight, dear." And she obeyed him instantly.

The two young men stood opposite each other, face to face, and there was no cowardice in either's eyes.

"If, Leonard Hirds, you came up here to stand between me and her who is to be my wife, I will thrash you to-morrow, big as you are, to a mummy; if you really came to defend the purest and best girl on earth from him you supposed to be a villain, I forgive and honour you."

"I did think you meant falsely, Mr. Meredith," said Leonard frankly; "but now, I look upon you, I confess you do not seem like a seducer. With regard to Phœbe being your wife, that shall never be; and as to the thrashing to a mummy, let us try at once."

"I have promised you no harm to-night," returned Frank.

"But to-morrow," said the young giant, "I shall be at Caryl in the wrestling ring."

Frank hesitated a moment, and then replied with meaning: "And I shall be there also, Leonard Hirds;" and each took his way in silence to his own home.

The two young men were not without respect for one another at heart. Frank Meredith knew that amongst the dalesmen, with most of whom

he himself was perfectly well acquainted, Leonard was considered highly; it was true that he had forbidden any to aspire to the hand of Phoebe save himself, but this pre-eminence of his excused him somewhat in the painter's eyes, who made allowance for his arrogance as he would have done for the like pretensions in a higher rank, where a fortune as well as a bride might have been the prize, and some hair-triggering, twenty-pacing cousin the monopolist. On the other hand, Leonard Hirds would freely own that there was nothing like pride about Frank Meredith, but plenty of pluck and spirit. The young painter had long accustomed himself to Westmorland sports, and was especially skilful in wrestling, making up in litheness and activity for what he wanted in strength: he had been thrown by the young dalesman often enough, but each time with the greater difficulty, so as to have become of late by far his most formidable antagonist. Frank well knew by whose underclerkly hand the desire to be "King at Caryl" had been carved upon the Wishing-gate, and he determined, if it were possible, to humble Leonard's pride on the morrow in the presence of the three counties.

Our wrestling in the north is a very different matter from prize-fighting, and I should be sorry if it ever grew to be like it: it is seldom that any serious hurt befalls the competitors, and victors and vanquished appear to be equally in good humour. The honour of being in the last two or three pairs—much more that of being sole conqueror—is esteemed far higher than the prizes themselves, which, indeed, are of no great value. Wrestling at Caryl, to a youth who is only experienced in contests with his neighbour dalesmen, is what speaking in the House of Commons is to a Cicero of “the Union” at Cambridge or Oxford. There are a great number of pairs, and a young and unknown wrestler rarely “stands up” more than one or two, and there are thousands of spectators to applaud or criticise. Raised and covered seats for those who fear the rain or love high places, and forms let out at a lower rate, enclose the arena, and a plentiful sprinkling of the masses lie down within upon the grass. The umpires also stand within to watch the combatants, that the fall be not attempted until each has obtained a fair hold—one arm under, and one over, and that, when they have once grappled, neither shall let go.

Two men come forward, chosen as the first pair by lot, and strip themselves, except to their shirt and drawers; they have been weighed in a neighbouring field, and are light or heavy weights as they are under or over eleven stone. They shake hands before commencing, and endeavour after a hold, each seeking for the best purchase, and grappling tightly when it is once found. Then comes the tug and the tussle: their arms are almost at a stretch; their faces, which were but now seen over each other's shoulders, have disappeared; the backs of their heads are alone visible, drawn down on a level with their spines. The strain for a few minutes is very great, but it does not commonly last long; one of them is dragged downward, and touches ground with his knees, or their legs mingle together, and, after revolving twice or thrice with great velocity, they both come to the ground—the uppermost being of course the winner. The cries of “Bonny Ambleside!” “Bonny Nibthwaite!” or whatever may be the dwelling-places of the respective athletes, never cease. The phrase of “Bonny leil one” puzzles the stranger a good deal, and he begins to think it some extremely populous district; but

“leil one” means little one—the smaller of the two competitors.

At this particular Carel meeting, the light and heavy wrestlers were mixed, and the prizes made general without regard to weight. We of Grasmere had several likely youths, but Leonard Hirds was our best man by far. Much to our astonishment, we saw the young painter drawing his lot amongst the rest, at whom Leonard threw a contemptuous smile, and was evidently disappointed at not being in the pair with him. Frank Meredith looked fragile enough when stripped, One ancient wrestler—now with one leg and one arm only, their fellows having been blown away by powder-blasts in Langdale—who always attends this scene of his former feats, assured me that “the bonny lad would be broken athwart the middle;” and indeed he did look rather waspish about the waist. His first competitor was a large powerful fellow; and when, after a long struggle, Frank cast him to the earth by the “swinging hype”—the knee thrown inward sharply against the adversary’s thigh—there arose a great cry of astonished joy. He was afterwards lucky in his drawing for some time, and obtained pretty easy

victories; his beauty and youthfulness, the smile upon his face as he shook hands before each contest, and the sympathising look, without a trace of vanity, with which he regarded his unsuccessful rivals, made him popular with the whole assembly, albeit there was not one amongst them who could hope for his final success. Nevertheless, it did so happen that the day wore on, and the pairs grew fewer and fewer, until Leonard Hirds and Frank Meredith alone "stood up," of all competitors. There had been a quiet determination about the latter throughout, like the concentrated purpose of revenge, which had prompted him to take the minutest pains in every contest, while the former had thrown his opponents to right and left like a madman, as though they intercepted his approach to some more worthy antagonist; both had opened their lot-tickets with greediness, and read them with disappointment; each desired, up till now, a combat with his particular foe. The embroidered champion's belt, and the honour of being "King at Carel," must needs now remain with one of them, and the excitement grew intense. It was evident that Leonard Hirds thought seriously of the task before

him, and would not let slip a chance of success through contempt of his less sturdy rival. They were to wrestle for the best of three falls: and it was evident from the beginning that the design of the stronger was to weary Meredith out. Frank instantly obtained his hold, but the other refused to clasp his own hands for a great while, so that the strain might fatigue his antagonist. Many shouted to the young painter to beware of this, for he was a favourite, as we have said, and Hirds had made himself many enemies through arrogance; but Meredith gave no heed to us in his excitement, forgetting that to himself none had "laid down," while to his foe no less than four had succumbed without an effort, leaving him by so much the fresher. Frank suffered as we feared: after many loosings, in which his object had been greatly obtained, Leonard took up earth in his hands — as is the custom for the firmer hold — for the first time; and we knew the struggle was nigh. Both of them "held" at once and together, strained to their utmost, shoulder to shoulder, and then head to head, rapidly whirled round for a second or two, and fell — Hirds uppermost.

The chances against Meredith were now three

to one, and his strength seemed failing besides. Some spoke to him flatteringly of his having obtained the second prize; and even his rival, as he shook hands after the fall, said something to the same effect, to which Frank answered in a fierce whisper, that he would throw him yet, and be "King at Caryl" after all. It seemed as if the painter's darling hope was now to be the winner of the wrestling match. In the second trial, they took less care for holding, as Leonard found he could not play the same game twice, and both grappled at once, as if with hooks of steel. The dalesman clasped his right leg round his rival's left, and bent the slender body backwards like a reed. With every muscle at fullest stretch, and the veins standing out on their foreheads, but without a trace of ferocity, they stood—models of power and firmness. For upwards of a minute and a half they stood, every instant of which we expected Meredith to give way, with the whole weight of his man thrown upon him, and he himself out of the perpendicular; but all on a sudden, Leonard's leg-clasp failed; we saw it tremble, and then relax, and almost instantly, taken at a frightful disadvantage, the young giant was thrown

heavily. A great cheer burst from a thousand throats, but not so much as a smile came over Meredith. Although his rival gathered himself up, and retired into the tent without difficulty, Frank knew that he was seriously hurt. An overstrained sinew had indeed given way; and while the spectators were awaiting the issue of the last "tie," the contest was virtually over, and the victory remained with the young painter. At present, none knew this but the two combatants. The victor followed the vanquished to where he was sitting alone, and took his hand. "You're king, sir," said the poor giant, "through this cursed strain."

"You must have thrown me, else, Leonard," exclaimed Frank honestly; "and it is not fair that you should be deprived of your honours by an accident: your heart was set upon this victory, as I know by what was written on the Wishing-gate, and I shall "lay down" to you, Leonard Hirds."

Leonard lifted himself up with pain to grasp his rival's hand, and tears were standing in his eyes, as, after a little pause, he said: "Thank you, thank you, sir! I don't wonder at Phoebe Forrest's preferring so generous a fellow to me. From

what I read, too, on the Wishing-gate last night, I think I know the dearest wish of yours also, Mr. Meredith. What interest I may have with my aunt, her mother, I beg then to transfer to you. I took too much upon me every way, trusting to this brute strength of mine, and I am fitly humbled."

"Nay, then," said Frank, "you have more reason to be proud of yourself than ever, and have conquered at Carel indeed."

There was a great disappointment and great disapprobation when it was known that Meredith had given up so good a chance, and "laid down" without a struggle to his antagonist. It was thought there would be no living at Grasmere now, for the airs the victor would be sure to give himself. But from that day, on the contrary, was our young dalesman altered, in all points for the better; while Frank Meredith, on his part, was amply consoled for his loss of the kingship at Carel, by his gain of the queen of the rushbearing. And thus did the good fairies of the Wishing-gate give to each man the gift which he desired.

THE STUDENT.

A STORY OF BLEN CATHERA.

There is a little street in the city of London, running off from one of its greatest thoroughfares, and filled all day with the thunder of wheel and hoof, wherein, although business of large firms is carried on almost in every house, no cab nor cart can pass another, so broad is the pavement, and so narrow is the roadway. The houses are so tall that the slant rays of the sun can never reach down to their lower stories; and at high noon-day so much do they overhang, with their huge penthouses, from beneath which the cranes haul their mighty burthens from below, that there is very little light in Blank-street even then. Dark and hideous enough it is throughout the winter time; the very snow, before it reaches the footway, is black and rotten-looking, and indeed can scarcely be

said to fall at all, but drops down in a half-melted state from the projecting eaves upon the passengers by day, and in the night-time keeps awake light sleepers with its monotonous thud. Nor do the many shadows in Blank-street keep it cool in summer time, for the air itself can scarcely find there any room to stir: a very unpleasant place of residence, upon the whole, for twelvemonth after twelvemonth of existence; and for all the hurry of commerce and throng of population about it, exceedingly resembling being buried alive. But generations had been born and lived and died in Blank-street, without feeling its suffocation too intense, or indeed very inconvenient; they had made money, and more money, and more still, which is a very agreeable occupation, for all the years of their life. And when they had all but made as much as they desired, when there wanted but a very little to complete the handsome competence which was never quite handsome enough to retire upon, then — they died. The one or two exceptional cases of men of business there, who had withdrawn their names from this or that firm in time, and had bought themselves houses else-

where, out of the din of town, were not of a nature to encourage others to do the same. They had got tired of what to them was anything but ease, in a few months, and would often come up in their private broughams, or be dropped at the corner of Blank-street by the omnibuses, to haunt the close, dull office, or the dusty warehouse, in which they had no longer any concern.

The Brothers Treadwill, Candle Manufacturers, had had premises in Blank-street for the last hundred years, and had no intention that any one had ever heard, of vacating them for the next few centuries or so to come. Their own wicks had been in reality long burnt down; they had both been dead and buried years ago, but in their name the business still went on, and flourished under the management and sole control of one Obadiah Spanall. One of the brothers had married, and begotten two children, whose sex, however, was far from being satisfactory to their progenitor; nor was it until the two young females were themselves wedded, and the younger had borne a son, that the firm recovered from its disappointment, and expressed itself as satisfied. Nor indeed was this to be wondered at;

for although, when a great landholder has no male offspring it is no such great matter, inasmuch as a girl can succeed to any amount of property as well as a boy, a tallow manufactory must needs have a masculine head to superintend it, and Mr. Obadiah Spanall was just the man. He had married the eldest daughter, Rachael Treadwill, who was childless ; and Mr. Henry Favor, his sometime partner, had married the younger, Lucy. This latter gentleman was an easy-going unbusiness-like person, given to hospitality to a degree that would have become a bishop, but with an undiscerning profuseness of welcome that gained him no friends. A kind husband, a loving father, and a jolly companion, Mr. Favor was yet rather a useless partner in the tallow trade. If he had not left everything in Obadiah's hands, he would have been a positive hindrance ; as it was, he was far from being a help ; and when he slipped out of this mortal mould, and was put in "store" in the churchyard, the Treadwill Brothers, Candle Manufacturers, flourished all the better for it. He had appointed his surviving partner, Mr. Spanall, to be the guardian of his boy Harry, then about

fourteen years old. And the childless Obadiah, who, for all his rugged nature, liked the lad almost as his own son, was fully determined to do his duty by him. This mainly consisted, in the old man's eyes, in diligently teaching him his trade, and in admitting him into partnership with himself when he should have reached the proper age; at which time certain moneys would become due to him, which meanwhile the firm had the advantage of using. The boy had been hitherto, Obadiah considered, somewhat spoilt, in being permitted to read almost any book he pleased, and to shut himself up alone in his bedroom, or elsewhere, to copy sketches — an amusement of which he was particularly fond. Beyond this, and from what he saw of him sometimes after dinner, when he always behaved well and respectfully, Mr. Spanall, although he had so great a regard for the youth, knew little of his pursuits and character. About a week after the father's burial, he sent for the boy into his little sanctum, a glass-case within the warehouse, where now only one of the two stools remained occupied, from whose elevation all who went and came, and nearly all that was done

in the vast place, could be observed, and thus addressed him,

“I hope, my lad,” said he, pointing to the vacant seat, “to see you, in the fulness of time, in that honourable place yonder, well fitted to keep up the credit which our firm has so long enjoyed in this great city. Your father has left you in my charge, to be, of course, brought up to this business, which he, poor fellow, had not the advantage of being brought up to, and which he could never properly take to in after life. If he could have done so, he would have died a richer man. It will be my task to see that you shall be differently qualified. You have been permitted, in my judgment, to remain too long at school, employed in studies from which you can derive little practical benefit. You have been indulged in too many gratifications, and particularly in that of indiscriminate reading, which I must henceforth prohibit. The day-book and the ledger will be now your principal literature. I will consult with your mother upon what pursuits may be advantageously permitted to you for your relaxation. Seven o’clock in summer, and eight o’clock in winter, are the hours at which I shall

expect your attendance at the manufactory. You will serve an apprenticeship to every branch of the business, so as to acquire a thorough knowledge of your future profession; and for the first year or two at least, I trust I shall hear no requests for holidays, which, in a lad of your temperament, will only unsettle and dissatisfy."

If the old gentleman, at the same time that he was performing his duty so accurately and at so early a stage, had permitted his natural feelings to have expressed themselves, he would have intermingled with these severe admonitions some affectionate, or, at least, kindly remarks; he would have tempered the dry strictness of his manner, and have waited now and then for an interrogation, or even for a respectful remonstrance upon the part of his young charge; but he was that sort of long-headed, but really dull person, who opines that business is business, and that any other element intermixed with it is weakness and not business. When he had quite finished, he asked the boy if he had anything to say, very much as a judge with the black cap in his hand might ask a criminal whether he had any declaration to make before the passing

of his sentence of death. And poor Harry Favor replied, "Nothing, sir ;" but, with his large blue eyes overflowing with tears, he ran up to his mother's room, and said there a great deal. He declared that he would do anything she wished him to do ; but that he knew she would never ask him to live for two long years amidst the abominable smells about the tallow-shop, and far less to give up his beloved books, that would then be the only solace left to him. Rather than be shut up, summer and winter, in such a place, he would much prefer being employed to keep the birds off beautiful green fields, such as those his father had been accustomed to take him to upon Sundays. And many other boyish things he said, and foolish suggestions he made, which, however, from the earnestness of his language and manner, were by no means to be considered meaningless or unworthy of attention. His mother, loving soul, was moved enough by them, and promised compliance with his wishes as far as she was able to help him ; which, however, she knew better than her boy, was not, after all, any great guarantee of success. Mrs. Favor was an affectionate but weak-minded woman ;

accustomed, by her late husband's example, to look up to Mr. Spanall for council about everything; and his strong will had always borne down what little opposition she had ever ventured to make. He thought her a fool, and treated her not a little contemptuously. And Mrs. Spanall, his wife and master, by no means contributed to check this conduct. She was envious of her younger sister's good looks, and passionately jealous of her having borne a son, while she, the elder, remained barren and hopeless of offspring. As in some Roman Catholic countries, persons in her situation, and old maids in despair of husbands, are said to be seized with the desire—a long time undeveloped—of becoming brides of heaven, or nuns, so Mrs. Spanall in later years had become, in the protestant communion, one of those unhappy persons who, under pretence of devoting themselves to religion, divest themselves as much as possible of human love and human sympathies; and sisterly affection was one of the earliest virtues which she had dropped upon her new road. She was hard-hearted, and she thought she was well-principled; she was jaundiced, and she thought herself dead to all

the pleasures of this world. Displeased with her husband's liking for young Favor, and foreseeing with her woman's acuteness that the boy would not easily be put into the working harness that was prepared for him, she had warned Mr. Spanall not to give way an inch. "The child has a spirit that must be subdued," said she; "and a worldly hankering after light and frivolous pursuits, which it is your duty to restrain." To all outward appearance, however, she abstained from interfering in the matter at all. The two ladies lived in the same old house over the manufactory; and, although they had different apartments, met every day at the same dinner-table. Now Mrs. Spanall knew the value of peace and quietness too well to risk an open quarrel, which a mother, however timid, is always ready to enter into with one of her own sex on behalf of a son. Mr. Obadiah, therefore had a private interview with Mrs. Favor, and easily persuaded that lady to let her boy try the candle business for six months at least, after which they would decide the better upon his fitness for that trade. There was nothing very hard in this proposition, had it been a genuine one; but Mr. Spanall had secretly determined that at the

end of that probation Harry Favor *should* be qualified to pursue the matter; while Mrs. Spanall was equally resolved that he should be made to pursue it whether he was qualified or not. Nor would even this, perhaps, have been very injudicious, however dishonest, in the case of five boys in Blank-street out of six. Professions are not made for the young, so much as the young for professions; and a very little training will often make a good merchant of a lad who has conceived a fanciful desire for the law, or even a respectable clergyman of another, whom "Tales of Pirates" may have filled with a fanaticism for the sea. Unfortunately, Harry Favor was a very strong exceptional case indeed. His imagination was unhealthily active; he had great talents, but they did not lie at all in the money-making direction; he had application, but to those things only in which he felt a passionate interest; in a word, he was what is usually understood by the term — a genius. And there was not a soul in Blank-street who was the least likely to find it out. How sad is it that the universal world should agree to gird at these unfortunates, who are, as it at the same time avers with a sort of mock

compassion, the enemies of no one but themselves ! Is it that we are really envious of the possession of this terrible faculty, which causes a man to be misunderstood from the cradle to the death-bed, and to be acknowledged prince among his fellows, if at all, only in the grave ? With Respectability, often born of Shame, and maintained by its illegitimate father, Hypocrisy, for a whole lifetime ; with Prudery, infamous parody upon true Purity, there are scarce any who dare venture to be merry. But at the Divine gift which falls to the lot of one perhaps in ten thousand, in after time to bless the rest in heart, and soul, and brain, no clumsiest quill-driver but blurts his venom out. Poor Harry, in the tallow-shop, was not a whit more accepted than the rest of geniuses. Such a claim would scarcely be allowed in the dipping-room ; and even that far greater one, in the respect of his companions, of being Mr. Spanall's nephew, was neutralized by the disfavour with which, as they soon discovered, his aunt regarded him.

“My husband wishes the boy to be treated like the rest,” said she to Mr. Brown the foreman. “See that this is so, if you please ;” and the foreman took care to see this was so accordingly. The

other boys employed in the place, like most boys when they get together in any number, were coarse and cruel. When they were not recreating themselves with hanging cats, by means of pounds of candles for make-weights, they were plastering tallow upon Harry's curling hair. They called him "Tallow End," because he was so thin and pale, poor fellow. Indeed, to place a sensitive, graceful-minded lad among such young ruffians as these, was like putting some delicate little white mouse into a wasp's nest.

II.

The mere smell of the melting-room was absolutely sickening to Harry Favor, nor could he ever get over it; nor was there a single compensatory circumstance to make up for any of these disagreeables; when he had done his work well, he had but done his duty; when ill, he was sure to be reprov'd for it. "How are you getting on, my boy?" said his uncle to him upon one occasion only, and reading the unmistakeable

expression of the lad's countenance, he had not waited to hear the answer. His sole delight was now in the company of his mother; to her, in the welcome evenings, he repeated whole poems which he had committed to memory before his books had been so ruthlessly taken away from him, and she listened, albeit she was far from understanding them, with greedy loving ears. As for his graver studies, in which, at a small school in the neighbourhood of Blank-street, he had shown a great proficiency, he was still permitted to work at them after business hours. For his years, and considering the adverse circumstances under which he was placed, he was a tolerable scholar; his classical reading was pretty extensive; and what he had read he not only understood but appreciated; he knew what history was, for he could master Tacitus; he had warmed himself at the source of poetic fire, and loved Homer well. Such a lad did not confine himself to the study of the works of others only, we may be sure, but had himself rare thoughts, intoxicating, mystic, wonderful, which he expressed more or less intelligibly with his pen. Upon his garret window in Blank-street, hedged in by miles of lath, and brick, and plaster

as it was, the moon and quiet stars still sometimes shone. Unhappy, fervent, harassed by loathsome toil, shut out from all natural beauties, the firmament was indeed a heaven to him. Those lovers of nature, who are compelled to pass their lives in crowded cities, alone can tell us how great a blessing are the stars; how full of love and pity are those tender orbs, which seem to lean over the watcher of the skies by night and drop him balm. Under their light it was that Harry Favor poured out his young soul in what were sometimes sadly unrhythmical stanzas, but none the less dear to him than are ill-formed children to their mothers. Upon one unhappy occasion, when the boy was at his work as usual in the drying room, a thought occurred to him such as, prudent young poet as he was, he was very anxious not to forget. And not only did he then and there transfer it to paper, but, becoming enamoured of it to an extraordinary degree, he stole some fourteen minutes or so clean away from the tallow-trade, in order to put the same into rhyme. The other boys stopped their work also to look at him, and point in derision; and their sudden cessation attracted the notice of Mr.

Brown, who, in another moment, had snatched the effusion out of the hands of its composer and transferred it to his own possession. It was not, perhaps, a very valuable production intrinsically; but, in the eye of Mr. Brown, it had not the slightest signification whatever. Even if he had known that it had been suggested by a pretty little water-coloured picture which Harry's mother had recently presented to the boy, it is improbable that he would have understood it much better; and had it been completed instead of being as it was, unfinished, it is quite possible that he might not have been clear about it even then. These were the few lines the foreman held up so triumphantly out of the reach of the poor boy's stretched-out arms, and which he read aloud for the public benefit with many a sneering annotation:

Stay, stay, in the bay,
Underneath the summer sun,
Where the shallop moves not on
For the little waves at play!

The keel moves not along,
But the shadow of a motion
From the blue and gleaming ocean,
Like the echo of a song,

Sways it, soothes it, aye ;
Where the norwind never blows —
Where the hills fend off the snows,
Stay, stay, in the bay !

Heed not ———

“ Heed not the tallow-trade, I suppose you were going to write, young gentleman ” observed the reader, when he finished the perusal amidst roars of laughter. Favor had hung his head down for burning shame ; but he looked up a moment with eyes of fire at this gibe.

“ Give me back my verses, you scoundrel, ” cried he.

“ Not till Mr. Spanall has seen them, ” rejoined the foreman, reddening in his turn, “ and has heard the term you have chosen to apply to me, sir. ”

The outraged authority went straight to the glass case, and told his story to the principal. The boys were hushed — the whole of the vast workhouse ceased to buzz during that solemn moment. Mr. Obadiah had been seen to shake his head as though in doubt what course should be pursued, and the spectators began to fear a compromise, when down the staircase, rarely used

by the female members of the family, which led through the upper apartments through the shop, came Mrs. Spanall, equipped starchly as if for walking abroad. Seeing something had gone wrong she joined her husband and the foreman instead of going out into the street; then the three had a very long conference. The lady was heard by those nearest the cage to say, "I insist," three times, and once, "it is for the boy's good, I tell you." Presently she walked down the shop and out of it, with the air of one of who, whatever it cost her sympathizing heart, had been performing her duty. Immediately afterwards Mr. Spanall, accompanied by his foreman, walked up to the spot where the young poet was still standing — a grove of candles surrounding him upon every side — and in the hearing of the whole company addressed him thus; the old man it must be remembered was of the old school, and an apprentice was in his eyes exactly what a schoolboy is in the eyes of a master. "You have applied to this gentleman, young sir" said he, "an epithet for which you deserve the severest punishment. If you suppose that because you are my nephew

you can behave as you please here, and with impunity, you will find yourself very much mistaken. If you do not at once apologize" The foreman who had a thin cane in his hand, here whispered to Mr. Spanall, but that gentleman waved him away with an expression of disapproval. "If you do not apologize, I repeat, Harry, I shall consider it my duty to delegate to Mr. Brown the office of chastising you for your impertinence." The boy looked up in his uncle's face as though to seek there for a gleam of tender irresolution, but all the mercy of the old man's nature had been expended in that offer of an alternative which had so disappointed the offended party; he looked up into the foreman's face, and detected there only a glance of malicious triumph. "Will you apologise, boy?" roared old Obadiah. The lad looked passionate denial, and the foreman lifted his cane. "Once more, will you" But before Mr. Spanall could make this second appeal, the impatient cane came down with a vicious whizz upon Harry's shoulder, and the next instant a huge bundle of moulds, six to the pound, hit the foreman between the eyes and rolled him over. The

whole incident did not take more than a couple of seconds, and when that time had elapsed the boy was gone. Violence of this description was utterly foreign to Harry Favor's character; as astonishing to himself as it was unsuspected by the spectators. He hated the foreman, he hated the boys his companions; he had only a cold respect, untinged with love, for his uncle; but he would probably have submitted to the proposed degradation but for these two reasons — first, that it was a public one, and secondly, on account of the insult offered to his poem. His foot was on the stairs to go up to his mother's room and pour his sorrows out to her ear; but something, perhaps pride, perhaps the consciousness of her want of power to help him, forbad that. He went out through Blank-street into the mighty thoroughfare beyond it, and roamed about the roaring Babylon with a bitter heart. In the meantime the discomfited foreman picked himself up and wiped his face; and the astounded Obadiah, not finding his glass case a sufficient protection from the many wondering eyes, betook himself to his own apartment to wait till Mrs. Spanall came home. He had an uneasy sensation that he had

been acting injudiciously and harshly; and he wanted a strong restorative of that kind to persuade him that he had not; "Obadiah," said the lady when he had divulged his awful intelligence, "do you know how to get into this boy's room?"

"Why, of course I do; he never locks his door, nor closes a cupboard, nor shuts a drawer; for the matter of that, he is the most careless poor fellow of all the human species."

"What should be done then first, if you want the boy to be tamed, Mr. Spanall, is to collect all his wicked verses and his pictures, and all that renders him unfit for attending to his business, into a great heap and to burn them." She said this very coolly, and weighing every word of it as though she were a doctor prescribing for a patient seriously ill.

"Well, we can't take them without letting the lad know of it, I suppose," said Mr. Spanall, testily.

"Why, not?" replied the lady with great suavity, "where is the difficulty?"

"*I* can't do it," said Obadiah with extreme emphasis; "*I* can't, that's all."

“I never shrink from *my* duties,” retorted his better half, “however unpleasant they may be;” and off she went to the poet’s little garret, with all the pleasure of which her nature was capable. Although it was so small, and perched as it were at the very top of the house among the tiles (which was dear aunt Rachael’s arrangement), it was a very pretty little room indeed. Over the chimney-piece, the book-case, and the bed hung charming water-colour sketches, at that time far rarer things than they are now. One of these — a harbour sloping up into full foliaged meadows, and defended from the waters of a stormy lake by two huge fern-clad rocks; at their feet, and perfectly sheltered from the tossing waves, a little skiff with a young lad standing up in it, and watching the breakers outside very wistfully — was the subject of Harry’s unhappy verses. All these Mrs. Spanall took down, and made a heap of them and some drawing books which were lying about the floor; then she winnowed the bookcase of its Latin and Greek authors, as well as of such English works as she considered to be disadvantageous to the system, leaving only a few wholesome books for instruction and edifi-

cation. Finally she picked up a manuscript here and a manuscript there, some lines written out in a beautiful clerkly hand in a blank-book, and some others scribbled off hastily upon scraps of paper. She poked in the drawers and found more lines, and she opened the desk that stood close by the bedstead, and took many pounds of verses out of that. She could not stop to make a heap of these, her curiosity to look at them was so overpowering; but as she hastily perused one here and there her brow grew blacker and blacker, and every now and then she could not restrain herself, as it seemed, but tore the offending poems into pieces and flung them into the fire-place or out of the window. She was thus employed upon one of poor Harry's favourite effusions, when she suddenly became conscious of somebody's presence in the apartment; her back was to the door, but she knew who the incomer was by the step; and, notwithstanding the purity of motive which actuated her in her present employment, Mrs. Spanall coloured up to the eyes.

"What are you doing, Rachel?" asked Mrs. Favor, but by no means in her usually submissive tones, "what are you doing, sister, in my boy's room?"

"I am doing the lad good," replied Mrs. Spanall, recovering herself a little; "I am about to destroy his foolish verses, and the books which led him astray from the right path."

"Put these papers down, Mrs. Spanall; do you hear me, woman? Put down these papers, and shut up that desk immediately."

The burglarious lady hesitated a moment, and then did as she was bid. Her face was white, and her teeth was set so very hard that she found it difficult to speak these words. "You will repent this, Lucy Favor. I wash my hands of you and yours from henceforth; Mr. Spanall will come and speak to you, and, perhaps, you will hear reason then." With that she swept out of the room, taking care not to touch the hem of her sister's garment in her passage. Mrs. Favor regarded her firmly, with the air of a valiant hen whose nest has been invaded and whose eggs are threatened by a rat; with feathers ruffled, with eyes flaming all defiance, she stood until she heard the retreating steps die away down stairs, and the door of the Spanall sitting-room slammed to; then she sank down pale enough into her Harry's chair and burst into tears. News had been

brought to her of something dreadful having happened in the factory, and she had come up stairs thus opportunely with the intention of comforting her boy. She knew not what was the extent of his misdemeanour, but now that she had not found him she began to fear the worst; the insult offered to him and her by Mrs. Spanall, and the unpleasant interview just passed were now clean forgotten, and the sorrow on which her heart was dwelling solely was this, "They have driven my poor dear Harry to run away."

III.

Harry Favor, however, had by this time no intention of leaving home thus summarily, and, to do him justice, the thought which had turned him from this, his original purpose, was that of the misery which he felt such a step would entail upon his mother. It was the only really pious feeling which the lad possessed. He had a great share, indeed, of these vague devotional impulses, which all persons of his constitution are more or less

endowed with ; but of practical religious principles he had absolutely none. There was, if we may use such an expression, more raw material for religion in the boy than in all the population of Blank-street put together ; but the sort of culture to which he had been accustomed was especially unsuited to him ; it would not have hurt, it perhaps would have benefited the whole of his young companions ; but to him it worked positive harm. To be made to sit perfectly still on Sundays, through three long services, besides the morning and evening extemporaneous effusions of Obadiah in his own house ; to be forbidden to employ himself in any way pleasurably upon the Sabbath day ; to be frowned at when he was inattentive, and to be cuffed when he went to sleep, were things distasteful to him enough. But besides this, his aunt Rachel was perpetually interlarding her conversation with remarks which she intended to be improving, but which in reality were of a very opposite nature indeed. Whenever an act of particular harshness was about to be performed by that good woman, she would usually proceed to justify it by a text prepared after some Procrustean method of her own to fit

the case. The great message of good tidings had been always proclaimed to him as though it were the words of blackest doom. He had confused, as the young are apt to do, the teacher and the tenets together, and the result was that another beautiful and kindly nature was fast joining that unhappy band, whose Christianity, if it deserves that name, is altogether without creed. His mother was the only mortal priest who had any influence over him in this respect at all; and her habitual submission to the expressed opinions of Mr. Spanall, even upon sacred subjects, weakened her power greatly. Sometimes, in his or her own room, she would put her arms around his neck, and speak to the wayward boy as only a mother can; but her words had passed away almost with the occasion for uttering them. After many hours' aimless walking through the crowded city, resolving many things angrily in his mind, the boy turned homeward, and trod the stairs that led to his mother's sitting-room with a heavy heart, but one prepared for her sake to bear much and strive to carry out the good advice which he knew would there be given him.

His hand was upon the latch when it was

arrested by the sound of a voice from within, which was at that moment especially unwelcome. The serious conversations between his mother and Mr. Spanall had been hitherto invariably conducted in the apartments of the latter, with Mrs. Spanall sitting by to jerk a text in occasionally with that theological shovel, her tongue; but Obadiah was now in Mrs. Favor's room.

Although aunt Rachell was just now decidedly afraid of her sister, and Mr. Spanall was always in some awe of his good lady, the logical conclusion of much more than was Mr. Spanall afraid of Mrs. Favor by no means followed; that gentleman was mightily indignant that his wife should have been so discomfited, or at least that, having been discomfited, she should have given him the rating which she subsequently did. He was savagely wroth with Master Harry for having been the cause of it all, and very far from being in a humour to spare the widow herself. To his extreme surprise, he had found Mrs. Favor by no means in her normal submissive state. "Give me my son," cried she, in answer to all his remonstrances, "you have driven him from his home. Give me back my son!" And, indeed, the lad

had been missing for a considerable time, and the night was coming on apace. If, therefore, the young gentleman at the door had taken advantage of his situation, as many far better principled folks would, without doubt, have done, and not put in an appearance until the enemy had come to terms, they would probably have been made very favourable to himself; but perceiving his dear mother to be almost choked with sobs upon his account, he would not give her another moment's anxiety, but opened the door almost at once, and rushed into her arms. The tide of triumph began, of course, to roll directly against him. "You wicked lad, who, having committed a crime, will not submit to punishment, but give your mother torture by pretending to run away, a thing that you have not the courage for ——."

"I have," cried the boy, interrupting.

"Why didn't you, then?" roared Obadiah, in a towering passion.

"Don't make my mother cry, sir," replied Harry, almost as loudly. The lad had passed, in the last few hours, through one of those mental changes which are not less sudden sometimes than the physical, and was full five years older than he

had been the day before. "This is not *your* room, please to remember, Mr. Spanall." The tallow merchant was almost taken off his legs with astonishment.

"Am I to understand, Mr. Harry, that you tell me — *me*, to leave this room?"

"Yes, sir," screamed the youth, supporting Mrs. Favor with one arm, and ringing the bell violently at the same time. "Don't you see that my mother has fainted?"

After this scene three entire days passed without any intercourse whatever taking place between the two families, during which Harry, who had quite determined not to go back, at any hazard, to the shop, enjoyed himself at his favourite avocations; but his mother was, she scarcely knew why, exceedingly apprehensive. Upon the fourth day, a note was received from Mr. Spanall, requesting Mrs. Favor's presence in their common dining room.

"You shall not go without me, mother," said the boy, with determination. So they both went down to the interview.

Mr. Spanall's character, although he was a perfectly just man by nature and in the business

sense, was harsh and inflexible, if not absolutely cruel. He was not often nor easily offended; but when he was so, he rarely forgave. His wife, during these three days, had been fortifying all his prejudices, and shutting up all avenues of pity leading to his heart; more than this—so nearly do the extremes of Jesuit and Protestant fanatic meet—she had persuaded him of the rectitude of her own cherished conviction that a little deception, used for an apparently good end, is by no means to be condemned. He was now prepared to abuse his position as sole guardian of the boy and trustee of the mother, by employing threats which he had no legal power to execute. The interests of the firm, that is, of himself, and the gratification of his own anger, were incentives to the course pointed out to him by Mrs. Spanall; but he would certainly never have originated such a lying scheme himself. When the mother and son came down to audience, he informed them gravely, that their property was left entirely in his hands, to be expended exclusively according to his own judgment; and that if his young ward should finally refuse to follow his father's trade, the money now in trust for the lad would

be applied independently of him to the improvement of the firm itself.

Mr. Favor and her son listened to this monstrous statement with the greatest concern, for they were entirely ignorant of business matters, and trusted implicitly in Obadiah's word.

"Then keep my money yourself," cried the young man, after a little silence, "I won't make your candles any more; I will rather trust to get my own living by writing, or, for that matter, by begging in the streets."

"You are very independent, sir," replied Mr. Spanall, coolly. "Do you look forward to maintaining your mother likewise in the same manner?"

The poor boy, alas, had never thought of this; cruel, false Obadiah that he was, to use such an ungenerous weapon! There had been nothing like it since the days when a blockaded army was wont to place the captured relatives of the besieging party right opposite their catapults!

The unhappy pair were obliged to surrender at discretion. The next day poor Harry Favor had to make a public apology to the foreman, and resumed his business in the dipping depart-

ment. His books were taken away from him, his walls left bare of pictures, his manuscripts destroyed and pens and paper placed beyond his reach. Aunt Rachel spared him nothing. It was now just the end of his probationary six months, and he was declared eminently qualified for the tallow trade. The foreman lost no opportunity of insulting him; the boys redoubled their practical unpleasantries; a loathsome slavery was beginning for him, which had no visible termination in the future. Before the year was out, that proud spirit was not only tamed, it drooped and sickened. The large eyes, which had been so full of dreamy thought, waxed dim; his cheeks grew paler than ever, and his tall limbs thinner and thinner day by day. But the worst was still to come. His dear, darling mother, the only human being who loved him, and was loved by him in turn, died after a brief illness — died, mainly, of seeing her son so wretched, and of the wretched life which she had led since she had been in the power of sister Rachel. She kept this, we may be sure, from Harry with all loving care; until the last, he did not guess how very, very ill she was, and far less knew the causes of

her death. But Obadiah Spanall knew ; he could not hush a certain whisper at his heart, which went so far as to apply to that highly respectable man the very actionable term of murderer. He was ill himself, very ill, because of it, and dared not attend the death-bed, and dared not mourn at the funeral. Wife Rachel's texts by no means afforded him the consolation which they seemed to give her own conscience ; her influence over him perceptibly diminished. When the physician who had visited Mrs. Favor left her for the last time, lifeless — her broken-hearted boy sobbing himself almost inanimate over the body, and kissing frantically the little hand that could clasp his no more — he had yet another duty to perform. He went up straight into Mr. Spanall's room, and informed him that if change — immediate change — of air and occupation was not afforded to young Harry Favor, the young man would die also.

“ He shall have them — he shall have them at once,” replied the merchant, with an energy which astonished the good doctor. It was in vain for Mrs. Spanall, pious female, now to talk of the lad's moral improvement having been so

marked since her plan for driving him into the factory had been carried into effect, of how obedient he had become in consequence, how regular in his habits, and of how very much less trouble he was to his friends than formerly. Her husband bade her be quiet so roughly, and rest satisfied with the harm which she had already done, that she did not even venture to answer him, but shut her lips up close with a snap, and turned up her cold grey eyes, implying by these movements that all *her* moral obligations in the matter were at least fulfilled, and that she only wished she could say so much for other people's. As for the unlucky object of the wife's tyranny and husband's solicitude, he was by this time so admirably trained as not to care which way the discussion ended. What little desire might have still lingered for an escape from his prison house, was now too entirely overpowered by his extreme grief for the loss of his dear mother. When he heard that he was to go at once to a northern seminary upon the sea-coast, in the neighbourhood of the fairest scenery in England, to study what he would and how he would for the next six months, he received it with

about the same amount of interest with which he would have hailed the announcement of his promotion, through personal merit, from the "cotton" room into the "mould" room of the factory.

IV.

There is a valley in this beautiful country of ours to this day comparatively unknown to any but adventurous tourists; the fairest and the finest, perhaps, in the whole of England. The high road—if a road can be called so which is unused by any but springless market carts, except in the fair summer months, when the cars of the lake country carry their wondering loads over it upon the rare fine days which favour that out-of-the-way region—leaves it almost at its very threshold; it and its sister valley which adjoins it are both lost, after a few miles, in desolate mountain passes; the scanty inhabitants, at the time this story treats of it were not less cut off from the world than those of farthest Hebrides.

Their metropolis — and they had but one town — was a place that was intended by nature to be the home of none but poets and landscape painters, but the scarce and valuable minerals found in its neighbourhood had made it hideous with store-houses and manufactories. A trip to this spot, fourteen miles or so, was then only undertaken by the dalesmen, after mature deliberation, and for the purpose of procuring luxuries of an unusual kind — shoes, for instance, or white bread, or tobacco; for these delicacies, butter, cheese, and eggs, and, above all, the produce of their spinning-wheels, were exchanged as often as money. This was the valley where the good folks built the wall to keep the cuckoo in, in order to retain for themselves an everlasting spring. The valley also where the oldest villager is opined to be the wisest, and where one of these elders, sitting in judgment to decide upon the nature of a tinker's donkey that had strayed thither, came to the conclusion, after much consultation with his books, that the strange animal was what is called by naturalists a peacock! A farmer in this place, having gone into the great city on one occasion upon his bare-backed steed,

was overcome with wonder at seeing in the market-place a saddle provided with stirrups. He sold all that he had brought with him, and purchased this incomprehensible machine; he mounted upon it in triumph, and rode homeward with the air of a Newton just convinced of gravity, or of a Christopher Columbus returned from the discovery of his new world. But when, alas! he reached his homestead, and the good wife and the bairns came out to welcome and admire, his wooden *sabots* could by no means be extricated from their iron prisons; push and pull as he would, the good yeoman's shoes would not come out of the stirrups. In despair, and for fear the horse should suffer for want of food, they turned him out, centaurlike, upon the green, and went to consult the sage of the little community. That wise man opined that the saddle might be taken off, and the Pater-familias, sitting upon it, placed in some warm corner of the kitchen; which was carried by acclamation, and the old man sat there the winter through, carding wool.

When the spring was far advanced, however, two students of St. Bees, who came that way, suggested that the old man should take his

wooden shoes off, and thereby the stirrups also : and this was effected with the very best results : the relieved party then declared that, while he had a field of grass or a flock of sheep, one of his sons at least should be kept a scholar at St. Bees, so pleased was he at the sagacity of the two young men. They left the valley, and plunged deeper into the Lake country, shouting with merriment at the good folks' simplicity. A little knapsack was at the back of each, and each had a stout pole with a spike at the end of it. They were both pictures of health, with brightest eyes, and most glowing colour ; only one was of a slighter build, though no less active than the other.

It was Harry Favor who was thus changed in half-a-dozen months from the sickly youth of Blank-street ; and his companion was a fellow-student, born in the hill country, and destined to be the pastor of one or other of its picturesque mountain parishes. This young man footed it very briskly, enjoying well enough the air and the scene ; but Favor, although he had already come a great distance, appeared to grow fresher with every step, and to be almost out of his mind with joy. The mountain breezes stirred

his blood like wine; his hat was off, and hanging behind his head by a string, so that they blew his fair curly hair back from his brow at their wild will. Every now and then he left the roadway altogether, and climbed up some heathery rock to see the better around him. You might know then by his sudden silence, and the quiet that came over his laughing eyes, that he had the soul of a poet. When his companion found that his friend was not following him, he, too, would sit down upon a stone or a heap of turf by the wayside, and proceed to enjoy himself after his fashion, with a short, black pipe, which he carried in the band of his cap in lieu of an eagle's feather; or would strive to cross the brawling river on his left by the aid of a few large stones scattered in its bed at unequal distances, most of which he cleared, but missed his mark now and then, and fell into the stream knee deep, which incident disturbed him not in the least. Then the two would march on together again, trolling a merry song, until some difficult, sheer ascent tempted them on, right or left, to try their mettle; or the rock-strewn crags of some half-dried waterfall, up which they ran with leap after

leap, and shouting triumphantly. It was after one of these extraneous excitements of their travel that his friend observed to Favor:—

“Why, I believe, my boy, you know every nook and corner of the grand old lake country as well as I by this time; and yet, but six months ago, you were, to say the truth, but little better than a Cockney.”

“Don’t speak of it, Wilson,” cried the other, “never speak of it; my guardian comes to visit me next week, and I dread to see the old man.”

“Why, he can’t carry you off, lad, with beak and talon, as we saw the kite carry off the little lamb upon Seaw Fell, I suppose. Should he get all the myrmidons of Bow-street to help him, we, St. Bees’ boys, would beat them off. Why we will carry you up among the hills, and hide you for ever and ever, rather than let him take you back to the—what was it?—tallow dipping.”

“I’ll die first,” said Favor, passionately.

There was no more laughing, nor leaping across becks and over rocks that evening. The unlucky subject broached by his companion had evidently poisoned all young Favor’s pleasure for that ramble. Not even in the next two days, which was the

extent of their holiday amongst the hills, could he shake off his melancholy; and when they came in sight of the old town again, that lies by the sea, the thought that Obadiah Spanall would be there in a few days, and find him so well and hearty, chilled him to the very marrow. Since he had seen that severe face last, he had experienced a new existence, and one perfectly suited to his character. He had gained prizes in the grammar-school, and had distinguished himself far above any who had been there for the same time as himself. There was no reason, in fact, why he should not work steadily on there, and become independent of his guardian altogether. This, however, he had not the strength of mind to contemplate; all that he had firmly determined on was, that under no circumstances would he be induced to return to the candlemaking, Blank-street, and Aunt Rachael. He was sixteen now, and had a strong will of his own; but he was without any real independence of character. His kind manners and behaviour had won him several honest friends; besides which, his lavish supply of money while at St. Bees had easily made him among those poor scholars exceedingly popular.

He could not persuade himself to become a beggar in the world upon a sudden, and to work his way for himself. His poetical faculty had increased vastly, to the detriment of that quality — never powerful within him — which would have prompted him to take boldly his own line in life, when not engaged in the school duties, which had been very light — and, indeed, they had not been suffered to press him in the least, in accordance with the instructions of the London physician. He had passed his time in exploring that beautiful Lake country, which lay at such a distance from the town as was to his renovated strength but very trifling. The young pedestrian, who would have been formerly fatigued with walking from Fleet-street to Oxford-street, could now do his fifty miles a-day over the hills with ease. What some unhappy, mangy lion in a travelling caravan is to the monarch of the desert, so was the apprentice of Blank-street to the climber of the windy mountains.

When Obadiah Spanall emerged from the coach in which he had been immured, with some few intervals, for nearly a week, he positively did not recognise the handsome, hearty youth who came up to take his hand. His guardian had only

heard of his gradual improvement, and had come up with a still penitent heart, intending to grant the boy some six months' furlough longer; but when he thus caught a sight of him, this good resolution vanished.

"Well, my lad, I trust this long holiday has made you fit to go back to work in town again," where his first words.

Harry did not answer, but his heart sank very low within him, and his cheek turned deadly pale.

"Not directly, you know," said the old man, perceiving the change, and attributing it to the boy's scarcely convalescent state; "not directly, of course, but in a month or so. I am getting old, and, to say the truth, have felt very queer lately; I want somebody to help me and trust in. Your old enemy, Brown, I am not so satisfied with as formerly."

Obadiah Spanall spent a week with his young ward, and could not but be delighted with all he heard and saw of him. He almost began to forget his ancient quarrel with the lad, and was so far moved by his entreaties as to grant him, before setting out, a six months' extension of leave.

Poor Harry was of that sort of temperament to which a long reprieve is almost the same thing

as a free pardon ; and when his guardian had left him once more in his beloved village, he felt as happy as a bird escaped from the fowler. What then was his horror, in some three weeks after this, at receiving the following letter, written in the well-known crabbed hand of Mrs. Spanall :

“ HARRY FAVOR, — I do not know whether you will be sorry to hear that your too kind protector, Mr. Spanall, has had a paralytic seizure, depriving him of the use of his right hand. He is very weak and ill, and begs me to write to say your presence in the shop, which is now under the superintendence of that good man, Samuel Brown, is absolutely necessary. It is needless, I hope, for me to remind you that your property is entirely in *our* hands, to be used for your benefit, if you will have it so ; but not to your destruction. I have written by this post to the Principal of your school, to tell him that you are at once withdrawn from his establishment, and I enclose a sufficient sum for your return hither by coach the next day after you receive this.

“ I remain your loving aunt,

“ RACHAEL SPANALL.”

Instead of returning an answer to this lady, Harry wrote a passionate appeal to her husband, that he might be suffered to remain where he was, even if it were with but a quarter of his present allowance.

"I would rather die, sir," he wrote "than be a tallow-merchant, and the servant of that fellow Brown again."

By return of post, and having received notice of his own withdrawal from the Principal in the meantime, he got this communication:

"Your dear guardian, boy, is now in heaven; to his long journey to see his disobedient ward, his fatal illness is to be in great measure attributed. Mr. Brown is head of the business for the present; and you will be, therefore, for the first time, under a master who will not shrink from doing his duty. It is his command and mine that you return to Blank-street without the loss of an hour.

"In haste,

"RACHAEL SPANALL."

Harry Favor placed this in his breast-pocket,

first carefully wrapping it around something else; in another he put a letter from his mother, the only one he had ever received from her while he was at a day-school in London. As he was leaving his room equipped for travel, his eye fell upon two volumes lying by themselves out of his book-case; one was a Plato, dog-eared in some places where it treated of the immortality of the soul, the other was a Bible. He stood as if in doubt which to take with him. As he touched the latter it opened at the flyleaf, on which was written in the little crabbed hand, "Henry Favor, the gift of his aunt Rachael, with a pious hope that he may amend his ways." He shut this up impatiently, put it aside, and took up the Plato. As he went out into the street, the branch conveyance which met the London coach in those days was standing at the inn door amidst a crowd of idlers. One of these came up to him—it was his late companion in the valley of Borrowdale, and upon many a breezy fell elsewhere—and said gravely, "Favor, I am deeply sorry to hear that you are going to leave us. You do not look half well enough yet to resume your old work in town;

indeed, my friend, you look very ill indeed this morning. Shall we take a walk once more among our old haunts, Harry?"

"Thank you, no, Wilson, not to-day I think," replied the other, "I would rather go alone." He pressed his friend's hand very tightly, and, as he turned away he added, "Good bye, old fellow; good bye, God bless you."

Wilson watched him travelling eastward with an unelastic step for several minutes, and said to himself, as he turned again towards the school-house, "Poor Favor, how he takes his going away to heart; I never heard him say that much before."

V.

It was late in the summer evening when the young student, Henry Favor, found himself scaling the steep sides of Saddlebaek, or, as it was then more commonly termed Blen Cathera Fell. Although unencumbered with a knapsack, he had walked with a very different step through that long journey of his from that with which he had been wont to tread his favourite hills.

He had been without food since the morning, but he was not hungry; he had scarcely halted once upon his way, but he was not tired; it seemed as though he could have plodded on for ever at the pace he held, but he was loth to stop, and still more loth to hasten. He was by this time taking his trackless way across deep ravines and over mighty masses of rock, although, by turning a little to the left hand, he might have walked up a steep, grassy slope presenting few impediments. His path symbolized the inflexibility of his fell purpose, and though he knew every foot of this his oft-frequented mountain, he chose to toil right on.

Although with each step that he ascended, some new and exquisite prospects stole into view behind him, he never turned his head; liking better, as it seemed, to keep his eyes upon the riven rocks and rugged heights immediately about him, than to regale himself with any view of the long rich valleys and peaceful lakes beneath. He had no longer any sympathy with such sights as these. Presently he delayed a little at a small tarn, whose ink-black waters were overshadowed upon three sides by precipitous steeps — a solemn

and even an awful spot in that vast solitude. He stood at the very brink of its dark depths, as though there lay something rich within them which he longed to obtain; but after a little he pursued his upward path again, tapping his breast-pocket before he started, as if to assure himself of the safety of something that he had placed within it. Soon afterwards he reached the very summit of Blen Cathera. The evening was so very calm, that even upon that eminence, nearly three thousand feet above the sea, there was but little air stirring; the whole of the mountain ranges to the south were quite distinct, although in shadow. Skiddaw stood up close by, as high as he; and, close in front, Helvellyn reared its equal forehead into the sky — Helvellyn, where another lover of nature breathed his last, no mortal now can tell in what sad manner; and where the fleshless bones whitened for months, as the buzzard and the rock-raven well knew! As Henry Favor gazed around him upon these solemn scenes, he forgot for a few moments his own gnawing cares in their strange histories, and in the legends which he knew clung dimly around them. What awful sights, hundreds,

nay thousands of years ago, had that old Druid circle yonder witnessed! What garlands of romance hung all about that lovely valley of St. John beneath his feet! It was on Soutra Fell there, that those aerial troops had been thrice seen by night from the very spot where he now stood! How many times had they been there, maybe when there was no mortal eye to see them! Armies of horse and foot marching, marching, squadron after squadron, where no hoof of beast could tread, column after column, leaving no trace of foot of man behind them — ceaselessly, and in well-ordered lines, for hours. Hundreds had seen them, and their sons had told the lad their visions many times. Some very old men he knew who had themselves witnessed, when they were boys, in 1745, these omens of rebellion and of wars. The men of science talked of the laws of refraction, and of how the troops of the House of Stuart were mustering at that very time upon the Scottish hills; and perhaps it was so, and the boy had deemed them right; but in that time and place such a weird-like phantasm seemed probable enough to him. He stayed upon that lofty, rocky eminence of Soutra

Fell, not without hope that some such sight might rise again. As for fear, the poor lad had a purpose now within him that shut out all fear whether of man or spirit. He was come upon Blen Cathera's top to die! These thoughts of his we necessarily guess at; but some things he did we know almost for certain. He read, or strove to read, in that dim light his favourite Greek author; the book was found lying by his side with wild flowers in it, plucked from the very summit, where they grew, to mark the place — such slaves we are of habit — although he knew he never should read it more. His mother's letter, too, he read; there was nothing in it but the expression of her love, eternal love and fondness for him; with some kind promise of a holiday (fulfilled or not, what matter?) years before; yet, doubtless, it drew tears. He must have hesitated somewhat after that, and gazed up, haply, to the summer sky with heart a little softened; it cannot be but that some precepts dropped from her loving lips must have come back to him then, and bidden him take that cursed phial from his pocket, and cast it into pieces on the rock. Perhaps his trembling hands

would have refused to do their fatal office at the last, but for the paper which was wrapped around it—the letter of the cruel woman, Rachael Spanall. She would have been doubtless shocked to think that her respectable sentiments should nerve the fingers of a self-murderer. What snuggest tea, or even something stronger, was that easily-resigned widow partaking of, perhaps, at the very moment when the poor boy, her victim, was meditating suicide in that far mountain solitude? What tremendous results, undreamed of by ourselves, may follow from the conduct of any one of us towards our fellow-creatures, whether our act may be the chief cause of them, or only the last little drop in the cup of human sorrow which makes it overflow! When the lad saw his aunt's handwriting, the whole world doubtless seemed to him composed of Mr. Browns and Mrs. Spanalls; and rather than trust in them he preferred to trust to fate, or (in spite of his favourite philosopher) to extinction itself.

Mad from Life's history,
Glad to Death's mystery
Swift to be hurled,
Anywhere anywhere,
Out of the world!

He was found on the third day upon Blen Cathera top, dead, with the phial of prussic acid drained besides him. His friend Wilson and others, with the dalesmen of that neighbourhood, searched for him unceasingly until they found him; and they laid the poor misguided youth within the hearing of the eternal sea, and within sight of those magnificent hills, which had taught him many things, but which could never teach him the true wisdom.

VI.

If Mr. Brown had been subservient to his master's wife, he had now become a positive slave to his master's widow, and oily as the little man was by nature and profession he slid into that prim lady's good graces, more and more: he was rather the reverse of what is generally considered to be handsome, but he was tolerably young; he had not a reputation for sweetness of temper but he professed to be exceedingly devout; he had his reward at last, and indeed without having very long to wait for it, for the relict

of Obadiah Spanall was united to him in matrimony about eight months after the former gentleman's decease: he was not one whit behind his bride in aptitude for business matters, and convinced her before the termination of the honeymoon that her affairs would be better managed in his own hands. The argument which Mr. Brown principally employed for this purpose was said, by those best fitted to form a judgment upon the matter, to be a little cane, considerably thinner than his thumb,—for he had an accurate and most useful knowledge of the British law—but very pliant withal, and not easily broken; the very one, we will hope for the sake of poetical justice with which her nephew Harry was to have been beaten by her direction a-year before. Every body said that Mr. and Mrs. Brown were a very happy pair and that they never had any words together after the first two months; but this again was owing to the late foreman's ingenious device of never permitting his wife to answer him; nor indeed even to enjoy her favourite demonstration of clasping her hands together to express injury to the spirit; he always made a point, with a key or any other hard substance which

he happened to have by him, of rapping her pious knuckles : if the late Mrs. Spanall, *née* Treadwill, had had her imaginary trials while passing through the earlier stages of this temporary vale, the present Mrs. Brown had certainly her real ones to the end of her journey, and being as we have said deprived of her ordinary consolations, she is reputed in her latter years to have taken to gin.

Nor indeed was Mr. Brown's existence perfectly pleasurable ; without imputing to him any more than to his lady the weakness of possessing a conscience, or of harbouring an idea that he could by any accident do wrong, he was yet savagely sensitive to the libels and calumnies of his fellow-creatures ; not only did the truth which was black enough, but a great deal worse than the truth, get abroad concerning his wife's deceit towards Mrs. Favor, and his own cruelty towards the unfortunate Harry. "Who stole the money?" was a very favourite remark with the Blank-street boys as they passed by his shop-windows, varied not seldom by that of "who killed his master's son?" and these things vexed the good tallow-merchant not a little. The furies indeed are as

potent if not so palpable as ever they were in the far-back ancient days, and retribution can reach respectable common-place folks in Blank-street, as surely if not in so dramatic a form, as it was wont to overtake the most cruel of warriors in his ancestral halls. The lone death-cry of that unhappy youth upon Blen Cathera Fell, echoed only by the mountain-walls in the deep night, found still a terrible hearing for itself in the breasts of his torturers; they not only had their punishment while they were here to bear it, but their memory has been execrated by every honest heart that has learnt their history; while pity for their victim prevents us from judging the weak erring boy with harshness, and even to this day bids the mind dwell with a tender sadness on his fate, and the foot to tarry a little longer for the sake of him, upon the topmost-heights of Blen Cathera.

THE WAD-HOLE.

A STORY OF BORROWDALE.

'Tis eighty years and more since Gawain Everstett lived in the wood-hut upon Seatollar Moor, in Borrowdale; but he is not forgotten there yet. Fine young fellow as he once was, he has long been dust; and of the dead we must not speak harshly, but only the truth. Where we are now standing this early autumn morning, he must have stood also many times, for it is the spot where was once his dwelling. Almost every vestige of the little cottage has disappeared; but the hill-side has no more of vegetation than it had in his time, nor, indeed, has any material change taken place in the whole valley. Its good folks are still the very simplest in the world, their language the broadest, and their notions the narrowest—just as they were in 1780, the date of our story, when they preferred to carry their

hay upon horse-back, slung in bundles upon either side, and their manure in wicker-baskets, to making use of such an innovation as wheels; their wood for firing was also conveyed in the same manner, and when the logs were too tremendous for this, they trailed them. The red-deer are not so numerous upon the Matterdale Fells now as to be forced to foray for their food so far as Borrowdale; but, if they did, it is quite possible that the inhabitants might take the strangers, as of old, for horned horses, to secure which they provided ropes, thinking to catch them by the same means as they did their ponies, when run wild. About pastoral matters and fishing, however—that is to say, about all that is essential to a Borrowdale man—they were then, as now, sagacious enough; they minded their own business: a feat not easily achieved by many in more favoured districts; and they were also (which cannot be said of the inhabitants of every valley,) almost without exception, honest men.

Gawain Everstett was not a native of this place; he had come thither attracted by the great wages to be got in the black-lead mines—vast treasures of wealth only recently discovered,

though they had lain under the feet of the simple dalesmen, generation after generation, for so many ages. They had used the wad merely for marking their sheep with, which was now worth forty shillings a-pound; the hill-side upon which Gawain's cottage stood had yielded, it was said, more than one hundred thousand pounds' profit already, and the store within was supposed to be inexhaustible. The company to whom it belonged had, however, just closed the wad-holes for a long term of years, and forbidden any further working: they wished to keep up the present high-prices, and not to glut the market with an article so costly as theirs; the working of the mine was a very great expense to them, and although their employed capital paid them enormous interest, it was better to get the interest without any expenditure at all. It was hard for them to procure honest superintendents, however highly paid, and harder to get honest workmen from the mining districts, to be employed at a place where one stroke of the pick had been known to bring down two hundred pounds' worth of ore. Well-barred houses had been built over every wad-hole, and every man that left the pit was scrupulously

examined, lest he should bear away any nuggets with him; but still the company had been robbed right and left, and they knew it. Gawain Everstett had never robbed them yet; and he tried to persuade himself that his honesty had not been, in a great measure, the result of these precautions. He felt very bitter, because, skilled workman though he was, he had only had six months of good employment, and now the mines were closed. He wanted money just now for an especial reason: Randal Fleming, the chief statesman (farmer) in Borrowdale, had a very pretty daughter, not disinclined to Gawain, whom her father was not likely to part with in marriage to a day-labourer out of work like him. The young man pondered upon these things, not for the first time, as he stood, in the early morning, before his hut, upon what is now called Wad-hole Fell.

Before him lay a white and billowy mist, looking as palpable as any snow on glacier; there was nothing else in sight, save mountain-tops; the bleat of unseen sheep came to him from below, the lowing of cattle, the fall of cataracts swollen with autumnal rains, the voices of men going

about their work in the valley beneath, the crowing of cocks in the homesteads, and the whistling of invisible shepherds, who were on the hill-side with their dogs. Gawain was not of a poetical turn of mind by any means, but he could not help drawing a parallel between his position with regard to natural objects, and the relation in which he stood to Alice Fleming—the accident of his poverty, which only required a ray of prosperity to dispel it, put her utterly beyond his hopes. He was allowed free access to her; was treated by her father with great kindness; was as welcome to the farm-house as though it were his own; and yet this intangible bar separated him from her as surely as sheet-iron. In the very next week was to be held the first regatta on Darran (Keswick Lake,) at which all Borrowdale would be present; and Alice had agreed to accompany him to see it. It was then that he had intended, months ago, when there had been no hint of the mines closing, to ask her to be his wife in due time, and after he had become a richer man, which he was then in a fair way of becoming, for he had just been made foreman of his gang. Such an offer now, he was well aware, would be treated

by old Fleming as an act of frenzy. Gawain stood for many minutes with his heart drooping, and his eyes fixed thoughtfully upon the ground; and, when he raised himself again, his face was as the face of another man. A thought which had been flitting before him, vague and indefinite for weeks, had now taken shape; he was to play another part in the game of life, he felt, from that very hour. He was not rendered happy, indeed, by this new determination of his, but he was made at least very exultant; when he saw the sun fall suddenly upon the mist, and scatter it to silver fragments, he accepted the omen gladly; as the long height of Glaramara came into view so grandly, and the flying vapour scudded up the pass towards Scafell, and when presently the peaceful valley itself lay bare, with its pleasant hamlets, and its green fields specked with kine, he could not choose but smile, although it was but grimly. There lay old Fleming's farm upon the mountain's spur, with its many cattle feeding round it, and its well-fed flocks upon the fell behind; and there was even Alice Fleming, his daughter, tripping with her milk-pails towards the house, easy enough to be seen, ay, and seeing

Gawain as easily, for she waved her hand coquettishly to the young man, in sign that he was to come down.

What a comfortable homestead was that dwelling-place of the fair Alice! and what cleanliness and neatness reigned there under her mother's house-wifely rule! How brightly, in repayment for its thousand polishings, shone the huge oak chest in the entrance passage, more than two centuries old, with the date cut out upon its dark brow in the strangest characters, and the carving of it all about—fruit and flower, and bird and beast—"all made out of the carver's brain!" And the inexhaustible store within it—layer upon layer, and acre upon acre, as it almost seemed—of the brown oat-cake, how tidily was it piled! In the mighty kitchen, which was dining-room, and drawing-room, and library, and all, what provender was laid in against the coming winter! Vast sides of bacon hung from the dark oak beams already, as thickly as grapes in a vineyard, and in a month or so would be seen suspended in that ample chimney no less than eight whole sheep; nothing would be taken away from them save their entrails and their

heads, and there they would hang by their hinder legs, drying, after the good old Borrowdale fashion.

Old Randal Fleming was in the kitchen, putting on his great wooden shoon, preparatory to going up the fell, to see his flock.

"Sit ye down," said he to Gawain, "and take a drop of comfort out of you big horn; ne'er a gauger ever saw that drink, mind ye. This is bad news, my lad, this shutting up of t' mine, for thee; thee scarcely kenst what to do, I fear; ech, Gawain, speak mun. Do'st think because I am well to do that I don't mind the poor, or because I am old that I have lost feeling for youth; na, na, there's corn in the valley though snaw's on the mountain with me, Everstett."

"Thank you," said the other, laughing awkwardly, "but I am not a beggar yet, although I come to you as one to-day, Fleming. I want thee to get me the hut, which I take by the week at present, for six months, from the superintendent, and let me be thy tenant instead of his. There is no liking lost between us, and I would rather not ask aught of him for mysel."

“Surely, surely, lad, thee shalt have it; he will be glad to let me have the bothie for a sang this winter, with the valley deserted, and the wad-holes closed; but how dost thee mean to live meanwhile, Gawain?”

“Randal Fleming,” replied the miner, gravely, “thou hast been a good friend to me, and thy daughter Alice is dearer to me than life itself; but it is time for thee to cease treating me as a pauper. I have money and to spare, thee wot’st not of; whatever thou mayest think to the contrary, I could bring thee every week of my life five Carel pound-notes such as these I hold in my hand here, and maybe I should have enough for mysel to keep body and soul together with still.”

The old statesman, who had stamped contemptuously upon the hearthstone with his clog at the first words of the address, rose slowly up from his stooping posture over the boot-laces, to give the young miner a prolonged Borrowdale stare.

“Then thee must have been stealing out of the wad-holes,” quoth he, decisively.

Everstett crimsoned up to his temples at this

naïve remark, but answered, with a laugh, "Well, you had better ask the superintendent about that; he is not a friend of mine, but I don't think he'll call me a thief."

"I tell thee what," said Randal, after a long interval, spent in deeper thought than he had ever conceived himself capable of—"thee saidst something just now about my daughter Alley; I dinna doubt thy word, mun, but if things be as thou sayst, maybe thou wilt bring me the five-pun notes every Saturday which are ligging about thy house doing nothing, and let me keep them for thee safe; and satisfy mysel at the same time."

"Well and good," replied Gawain; "it shall be so, but I had rather you had believed my word;" and up the young man strode, away to his hut, leaving the statesman firing off at intervals, "The de'il is in it; the very de'il is in it," the overcharge of his excited feelings, like minute-guns, and in about as astonished a condition at the wealth of a miner thrown out of employ as that of his fellow-dalesman when he saw the sack of lime smoke more and more in proportion to the water thrown upon it; a

phenomenon which *he* also attributed to Satanic agency.

Pretty Alice loved Gawain with all her honest heart, and trusted him implicitly as only maiden can trust; but she had the curiosity which never fails her sex, whether in Borrowdale or Berkeley Square. That very evening, while the moon was sleeping upon valley and river, she took her way to the accustomed trysting-place upon Seatoller Fell, with a more eager step than usual, convinced that her laddie would not hesitate to tell her all. No more romantic spot was surely ever chosen for the meeting of two lovers than those yew-trees below Gawain Everstett's cottage; the "fraternal four" which "form one solemn and capacious grove;" what layers of solemn shade they throw around them; and between their mighty arms, what glimpses are to be seen of mountain heights and valley depths of fairy-land; nor is an undersong from the curving Derwent wanting, to make "stiller by its sound the inviolable quietness."

Perhaps it was an unwillingness to break this beautiful silence which led these two young people to lay their heads together so closely, and whisper

what they had to say ; nobody save the two grey owls, which doubtless resided there, as they do now, in the largest yew, could have heard what they said, for the first few minutes of their tryst, they spoke so very softly ; but after awhile quoth Alice Fleming :

“ And now, Gawain, thee wilt tell thy Alley how is’t thou art become so rich a man ? ”

“ Nay, dearest, ” answered he, gravely ; “ when thy father would not believe me, I swore an oath to myself that I would tell it neither to him nor to his kith nor kin, and that oath will I keep. ”

“ I dinna care to ken, Gawain, ” urged the girl, “ but I would like to feel that thee trusted me more than any one else ; thee said’st to thyself thee would’st not tell, laddie, but thee didst not swear that thee wadst na write it doon. ”

“ But would you promise never, never to look at it, Alice Fleming ? ” said Gawain, smiling.

“ Never though I’m dying to know, lad, never until ye give me leave, as I hope to go to Darran. ”

Darran Regatta, then just established, was the one white day of Borrowdale, and the event of the whole year most counted on by its maidens, so the asseveration was solemn enough.

“After I have taught you mysel to read writing, Alley, it wad be a sore return to abuse my trust, wad it not? Here’s a bit of paper, see, and here I am setting down the secret upon it, with a bit of the black chalk; and now you have it faulted up close and snug, with nothing to keep it safe but the word that you have passed to me.”

Again the conversation grew so subdued for a few minutes, that even the owls could scarcely hear it.

“And now upon my part,” resumed Everstett, “I have a favour to ask of you; let our tryst be set on Glaramara Fell yonder, behind your own hame, and no more beneath the yew-trees.” Alley looked up a little surprised and hurt. “Yes,” he continued, “since your father doubts my word, it is like enough he may doubt me in other respects, and I wad rather cross the vale to thee, than that thou should’st come up hither, Alley, my love.”

After an affectionate adieu, the lovers parted, and the young girl tripped back again along the winding path by the wad-holes to her father’s house. Gawain watched her with loving eyes upon her way, and as the moonbeams fell upon

her as she crossed the high stone-bridge, uttered a sharp cry like that of a corn-craik; she turned round and waved her hand at the well-known signal, then crossed into the shadow of the sycamores that stood before the farm, and was no more seen. Then the young man sighed deeply, and there came upon him the exhausted look of one who has been acting a part uncongenial to his nature.

For the next few days Gawain entirely absented himself from Glaramara farm, and only called there at their expiration, for a few minutes upon his way to Keswick, to make certain that old Fleming had performed his promise concerning the hut upon the Fell. At the week's end, however, he returned, bringing a crisp Bank of England note for five pounds, which he placed in the hands of the old statesman, exhibiting at the same time a pocket-case pretty full, as it seemed, of the same silvery tissue.

"I must have filled my pockets at the wad-hole to some purpose, Randal Fleming, must I not?" said he.

"Truly, Gawain," quoth the honest statesman, "glad as I am to see thee rich, I would almost

as lieve know thy secret, as hauld thy money. Thee must have found t' gowd ark, I doubt, as lies, they say, in Stickle Tarn on t' Fell."

"Very like," replied Everstett, mimicking the old man's dialect as he used his favourite metaphor; "and what thee seest now is nobbut like t'clock when it gis warnin to strike twelve, to the money I will show thee one of these days."

There was no objection now made to Gawain's escorting Alley to Darran next day, which the young man rightly considered to be tantamount to a permission to court her; whatever doubt at all events he may have had upon that matter, he gave himself the fullest benefit of, and the young lady, upon her part, laid by her clogs, and new greased her shoon for the festivity, with many a pleasant flutter at her innocent heart.

Far be it from us to relate in simple prose that which has already been sung in grand heroics by a poet of that period, the doings at Darran Regatta: the mock attack upon Poeklington's island; the novel horse-races, where all the steeds were thrown into the centre of the lake, and the winner was the horse who first touched land; the boat-races, and the dance by lamp-

light below Keswick town; the mimic thunders from "the six brass swivels" reverberated from Skiddaw to Scafell, and the linked sweetness of the music of the French horns long drawn out through valley and coomb:—

"Each cliff, each bank, each mountain, wood, and dale,
Returns a varied note; it floats in air,
It mixes, meets, returns; 'tis soft, 'tis loud;
As if the unnumbered spirits of the rock
Held their aerial concerts 'midst the hills,
And to his golden harp each join'd his voice,
To welcome to their bower the fairy queen."

No wonder that Alice staid later than she should have done that evening, and that there was a *fracas* at home in consequence; Mrs. Fleming being justly excited and inclined to underrate the glories of Darran, and her daughter striving to exculpate herself by exaggerating the same.

"Oh, mother, mother, an ye had bin thear, ye wad ha stayed teu; seek fine wark ye never saw; efter dinner we went to t' lake."

("Lake" is Borrowdale for "playing," and had not been adopted for Darran Water, so Mrs. Fleming at once seized the opportunity for misunderstanding Alice.)

“Lake! eigh thou wad lake; and ramp and rive o the cleighs, I war’n? let’s luik if none of them be roven? What lake was’t? Tennis or Antony Blindman?”

“Mother, ye don’t understand ma; went to t’ watter, and got out int in a booot; at had things like, like a battelter on aither side on’t, at carrit it on some way or other; and we drank finest stuff at ever was; they cawt it wine and cider.”

“Wine and cider, uman, what’s tatt?”

“What’s tatt? Nay, I knaw not.”

“What ist like?”

“Like? it’s like; nay, I knaw not what it’s like; it’s like whey-whig and drink, but far finer.

(Whey-whig is a liquor made of whey, with mint, and balm, and walnut leaves to flavour it, Falernian of Borrowdale.)

“Hang the wine, and cider, and the lakes,” exelaimed Dame Fleming, a little impatiently, “an thou hasn’t roven thy cleighs, nor worn the stocking heels out, I kair nut; gitt te cloggs on, an doff that fine gown, an lig by the hatt and aw things; thou mawn gang to th’ peat moss to-morrou, after all this skelping; it’s far better for tha.”

"Oh, mother," cried Alice, as she wished the old lady good-night, "Miner Gawain is a canny fellow!"

"Git away with tha an thy canny fellow," replied the dame; but she knew by that indirect observation that her daughter was now plighted to young Everstett, and she was not displeased to learn it.

In six months from that day at Darran, it was arranged that the young couple were to be made one, and every week during that time Gawain brought the money to Glaramara farm, which had been agreed upon as the evidence of his real prosperity. He was, however, now by no means the handsome healthy lad who had come to Wadhole Fell twelve months ago; he looked fagged and tired on those now unfrequent occasions when he came to pass the evening with the Flemings, and he was for ever going to Keswick, and even sometimes as far as to Penrith, upon mysterious business matters. When certain news came into the valley that the mining company had been thrown into great perturbation on account of some inexplicable fall in the price of their black-lead; and afterwards,

when it was further reported that a vast quantity of the wad was being sold in London, which, without doubt, had never passed through Keswick hands, then shrewd old Randal Fleming's heart misgave him greatly. He needed all the superintendent's positive assurances that no robbery had been certainly committed within his district, that all the houses over the wad-holes were in the hands of honest men, and that the cave-doors, marked in such a manner, that, if tampered with, they must needs disclose the fact, were all intact, to convince him of Gawain's innocence. When convinced, however, he became, for very shame, one of his staunchest defenders, and willingly agreed to give him Alice for his bride at the end of the current month, induced thereto not a little, it was said, by his desire to learn the young man's secret which was to be divulged, he promised, upon his marriage day. Alice never dared to tell her father that she had it safely written down already, for fear of his insisting upon seeing it, but carried it about with her, unopened, wherever she went, in her snowy bosom faithfully, Loving-hearted, simple Alice Fleming, was worthy of a better man than her plighted lover.

The night before her wedding-day three strangers came up Borrowdale by moonlight, accompanied by the clerk of the wad-works; they were police-officers from Penrith, in search of the body of Gawain Everstett, accused of selling black-chalk, not honestly come by, in that town, and they took their way in silence, by the four old yew-trees, up to the hut upon Seatoller Fell. The door was fast locked, and it took them some time to break it open, but, in the inner room, to their great wonder, they found Gawain, who made no sort of resistance. "I wish you had been a day or two later," said the young man, calmly; "I have now thrown all my labour away." And in truth the unhappy man had striven at his unlawful work with a diligence and an amount of toil that seems incredible. Concealment was out of the question; a tunnel large enough to admit his body had been run with admirable judgment diagonally from the floor of the room into that very mine close by, wherein he had worked as an honest labourer; once there, his task was easy, and discovery almost out of the question. Since the wad-holes were kept strictly closed; the only danger was that of some

one coming to his door when he was away, or while he was under-ground, and out of hearing, and this was why he had asked Alice Fleming to change their trysting place. He had at first gulled her father by the exhibition of a considerable sum, which he had really by him, but, when he had once effected an entrance into the pit, he easily obtained great prices for the stolen ore, which he conveyed to the large towns in the neighbourhood, and surreptitiously sold. During the six months in which he had been engaged in this dishonest occupation, he had thus disposed of more than two thousand pounds' worth of wad. His intention seems to have been to have fled the country, as soon as he had married Alice, as he took no pains to cover up the mouth of the tunnel, which he might have easily done. At the very moment of his capture, there was a heap of new-hewn ore upon the chamber floor, while he himself was sweating with exertion, and had but just laid by his pick. No wonder, with such constant physical exertion and mental anxiety as his, that his health should have so failed, and his good looks have fallen away; they say that his constitution so greatly recovered

itself during his imprisonment, that it was very hard for the witnesses at Carlisle upon his trial (which took place four months afterwards,) to reconcile his appearance with the haggard-looking miner who sold wad in Penrith; the peculiarity of his case had no precedent, and, although a law has since been obtained of a much more stringent character, in order to meet such circumstances, he escaped with a few months' confinement. As for Alley Fleming, she never married at all. Some persons said that she ought to have wedded Gawain, because it was all for her sake that he had broken the laws; but she said "Nay!" to that. Gladly would her loving heart have forgiven him all but one thing — want of confidence in his betrothed bride; but "Ask me no questions, I'll tell thee no lees," was all the secret which suspicious Gawain Everstett had written upon that cherished slip of paper. "Now, if he had really loved me, he could never have doubted me," said Alice Fleming; and the poor girl took no other "canny fellow," but lived and died an old maid.

WASTDALE HEAD.

Wet-footed, weary, and with a mountain appetite, we, a Reading party of four, arrived at Wastdale from the sea-coast, after mid-night, and were directed to the little farm-house by its whiteness, and not by candle gleam. The good folks are not fashionable in those parts, and had all gone to bed.

“Wow, wow, wow, wow,!” cried the sheep-dog very shrilly, and adding something to himself against us in his throat, which we could not quite catch. “Wow, wow, wow, wow,!” bayed the deep-mouthed hound, who is fox-hunter, hare-hunter, and vermin-killer, all in one, amongst the Cumberland Fells. But neither of these woke their master. When we knocked at the door, however, a female servant opened one of those hinged panes which still do duty in the lake country for window sashes, and inquired what was our “wull.”

"Beds," demanded the Reading party, with one voice. "Beds, and a supper; we hope the house isn't full."

"There is but one bed, sirs," replied the maiden pityingly.

"We hope it's a Bed of Ware!" ejaculated the party, piously.

"I dinna ken," rejoined she; "'tis a matrass bed, and holds, may be, two; but I will wake the mistress."

Good William Ritson of Wastdale Head and his wife are the two last persons in the world to make difficulties or to be out of temper. They both got up immediately, and, by their help and the maiden's, a fire was kindled and bacon and eggs were on the table in the pleasant eating-room besides the kitchen in an inconceivably short time. As for beer and spirits, such accommodation we well knew could not be there supplied, and we had alleviated that misfortune by bringing some with us from the inn at the foot of Wastwater, besides which the milk was divine. Then, for sleeping, there were two beds after all; and university men who will pedestrianise in out-of-the-way valleys after midnight must be content

with indifferent lodging. Some visitors were to leave in the morning; so, for the next night, the temptation of a bed apiece was offered to us. If acres of down, however, had been spread upon this occasion for our especial use, none of us could possibly have slept sounder, nor — some of us — longer.

I declare I was down-stairs the first, and had the first view of what is, without question, the finest valley in England. The highest mountains which we boast of are all clustered about its head, which forms the centre knot of the great mesh-work of the northern fells. Scawfell Pike, three thousand two hundred and twenty-nine feet, is of course the loftiest; but its giant companions, Yewbarrow, Kirkfell, and the Pillar, are very little short of it; while all of them are invested with a certain savage grandeur denied to most English hills, from their descending sheer, almost perpendicularly, into the valley, and being composed entirely of crags without any turf. Great Gable, however, is an exception to this; one side of its huge pyramid being an enormous steep of grass-land, looking very tempting and even easy to the climber — until he begins to climb.

The lake is dark and terrible enough, and its far-famed rainbow-coloured screes are very bad, almost impossible walking; but the view is flat in that direction, and very inferior to that up Wastdale Head. This valley has the appearance of a complete *cul-de-sac* from the enormous height of its passes; and, in truth, we were so happy in it, that we should have scarcely cared had there been no way out of it. The pass to Ennerdale — not that of Black Sail, which is Piccadilly compared to it, but the Dalesmen's Pass — looks just like two or three thousand feet of wall. After the trout was eaten — which is caught in greater numbers here, perhaps, than anywhere in the north country — and the eggs and bacon (again,) and the oat-cake, and the excellent honey, we started to spend our day in Wastdale.

The hamlet, consisting of five houses, is six miles from the little village of Strands, and about three times that distance, even across the fells, from anything like a town; but it is not behind-hand in civilisation. There is a church — less, surely, than any church save those upon mantel-pieces, with a slit in the roof for missionary

coppers—and a school-house smaller still. William Ritson, who has much natural cleverness, and a simple honesty such as no education can bestow, laments that he is no “scholar” himself, allowing that he should not get on very well without his gude wife’s larning; but the next generation is erudite enough. Upon seeing an apparition afar off, of a person in a black coat—a rare bird in such a place, and like unto a black swan—we asked of a native what it might mean. “Yon’s priest!” was the reply; that old designation still clinging to the clergy in these out-of-the-way fell parishes.

It was not the first visit of two of our party to Wastdale, so we took our way towards Pease Gill, under Seawfell Pike without any hesitation. The guide-books of the lake district place the highest waterfall upon Buttermere, and call it one hundred and sixty feet; but it is plain that their authors never saw Greta Forces; they fall down from those roofless, rocky grandeurs yonder, which bold Professor Wilson calls “the devil’s suite of show apartments in Seawfell,” which really (now he has mentioned it) have very much an appearance of that kind, and there were six

gentlemen ushers of his — ravens — in his outer chambers during the whole of our visit.

“Now, don’t — don’t be a fool!” cried the rest of us, while Hotspur would come down the shelving tongue which separates these two roaring ghylls that take their dreadful leaps upon either hand. I, for my part, dared not look at him; he never could get over that neck of land where it narrows between the abysms, I felt sure, slippery as it was with recent rains, and affording only one huge stone for a certain footing. He was nearing it, I knew, from my friends’ silence. Presently a sharp cry arose, and the sound of a heavy body falling, striking as it fell against the rocks, and so into the torrent. My knees were loosened, my brain whirled round and round, and I felt positively sick with horror.

“Jim-a-long-a-Josey!” hilload Hotspur, from a place of safety, and by way of encouragement to the bounding stone. He had but just touched this reliable-looking monster with his foot when it served him that trick, and he had to creep down backwards upon hands and knees over the difficult spot. However, this incident suggested to us one of the most glorious pleasures which

I ever experienced ; an enjoyment which not the metropolis of the world could have afforded us, and, indeed, few places in England so well as Wastdale Head. Passing on to Pease Gill, close by where the ravine is many hundred feet sheer, and the torrent fills up the gully under a huge natural archway, we took up our station a long distance up the steep side leading to the chasm, and using indiscriminately our sticks and legs for levers, loosened the mightiest stones from their moist beds, and set them rolling. It was hard work enough with the very large ones, it is true ; but what a rich repayment ! The huge mass set on end first revolves slowly, then faster, then faster, then bounds, then leaps like a very antelope, leaps higher and broader, setting this and that boulder, almost as large as itself, in motion likewise, leading a great army of boulders, bounding and splitting, to the very edge of the precipice, then springing right out into space — and hark ! — perhaps crashing on some unseen projection, and rending the very fibres of the rock, or falling, after a long silence, plumb into the centre of the abysm — into the depths of the mountain-stream.

At first we were too drunk with this new wine to proceed scientifically ; it was grand enough to deafen ourselves with the sullen echoes which we forced out of grey Seawfell, to listen to that solemnest of sounds, the “noise of rocks thrown down” a steep place into the void ; but presently we went about the matter more designedly ; we began to calculate to a tolerable nicety what road these terrible fellows would travel, what track they would lay bare and ruinous upon their pitiless way, and the sight of the destruction which they wrought at random set us upon worse ravage and better planned ; upon the verge of the precipices were many trees of various hardy kinds, but chiefly mountain ashes, growing out, some quite horizontally, some at an inclination with their tops, and with part of their trunks exposed to us ; we directed our natural artillery for the especial destruction of these beautiful gifts of nature, the only peaceful features of the rugged scene ; and, one at a time of course, I am ashamed to say that we killed several of them, two upon the spot, and left a third in an almost hopeless condition. It took a very long time, however, to accomplish this ; the missiles sometimes missed

their mark altogether, or sheared off a branch or two, as though they had been cut with a knife, or leapt right over the very tree-top with too high a range ; or, using up all our shot and shell in that particular battery, we had often to bring our material from a distance, and with the greatest labour ; but we enjoyed ourselves at it most thoroughly, nor can I imagine a more poetical and fitting means of defending one's native land than these similar weapons which the Tyrolese provided for their Austrian invaders.

"I rather wish there were a few Austrians in Pease Gill to-day," cried one of us.

"I should rather prefer Russians," said another.

"If I could be sure of the right men," quoth Hotspur, setting, with his foot, half a hill in motion as he spoke, "I should like it to be choke full of Delhi Sepoys."

But, for my part, I thought killing the mountain ashes was bad enough. It gave us a tremendous appetite for the trout and fowls, and broiled ham and eggs (again), when we got home (home is just the word for that clean and pleasant farmhouse, with all its handsome inmates anxious

to do their best to please); and after dinner, before the sports began, which take place in Wastdale upon most evenings, I felt inclined to sit a little with a cigar and read.

The things most wanted here, however, where it sometimes rains, are books, nor did I chance to find one, with the exception of a Shepherd's Guide*. This is a large pictorial work, and promises very well upon first appearance, but from every wood-cut having the same subject—a sheep—and all the letter-press treating solely of the different marks by which the ownership of stray wanderers may be discovered, the volume is on the whole monotonous. To an unpastoral student, indeed, its information is even unintelligible. "Twinters are generally redded," says the Guide, but how am I to know that this means that two-year-olds have a red mark across them; or how should I recognise these nice distinctions if I met with a stray mutton in my field, "cropped near ear, upper key bitted far, a pop on the head, and another at the tail head, ritted, and with two red strokes down both shoulders." Putting this work

* Since this paper was written the above evil has been however remedied.

aside, I, therefore, asked for the Visitors' Book, which is, of course, kept everywhere in the Lake District. I wanted it chiefly for its poetry, having recently committed to memory a pleasing stanza (forming the whole poem), written at the Swan Inn at Grasmere, and hoping to find something similar by the same author; the lines ran thus:

“Where lake and mountain lie in sweet unite,
And Terra yields to many a spreading tear;
Where fleecy clouds adorn each swelling height,
And form the neighbourhood we call Grasmere.”

Besides having this particular expectation, I confess I like dipping into a Visitors' Book. One reads in it the name, perhaps, of some dear friend, and the knowledge that he too has enjoyed the scenes in which we are delighting is very pleasant: or our own name, perhaps, occurs in it written years and years ago under different circumstances, when we were younger, but not blyther either, which is a consoling reflection; and even if our condition be changed for the worse, the memory of “the days that are no more,” though sad, is always sweet.

There is not a great deal of poetry in the Wastdale volume, not even much of those huge extracts from *The Excursion*, which embellish most of

these books in Lakeland, and of the original verses
I am afraid these are the best :

“ The vehicles here are rather scarce,
There is not even a one-horse hearse ;
But Willy Ritson’s a merry old chap,
And knows all the country without a map.”

One does not at first see how the want of conveyances can be made up in any way by the goodnature of our good landlord, but upon looking further into the book, the couplets seem to have some connection too.

“ James S., John S., and Miss J. were conveyed over Sty Head Pass by an experienced guide,” they write ; a statement which certainly speaks very highly for the robust character of the north country dalesman. Some other persons give us to understand that they are “ upon a predestian tour, and have become a little tered.” Upon which a critic appends this note — “ We advise these people to read Walking’s Dictionary.” One peculiarity of all writers in Visitors’ Books is, that they tell us where they were yesterday, and where they are going to-morrow, with the most elaborate distinctness, as though they were playing some game of Follow-my-Leader with the universal tourist. It is extremely rare to find so

undetailed a statement of a gentleman's movements as the following :

“Mr. R., upon his return after a protracted tour to the Hampshire Lowlands.” Whereupon the censor who always haunts works of this kind inquires pertinently, “where are the Hampshire Highlands?” This gentleman has all the severity, if not the acuteness, of a Croker. At the conclusion of some lines begining —

“Oh, happy day that fix'd our choice
To come and see this beautiful place,”

he writes, “Extract from Shakspeare, Milton, or some other swell, we suppose.” Where a learned tourist has chosen to sign his name in Hebrew or Arabic, he notes, “This man is a snob for his pains;” and thereupon a second critie, more satirical still, rejoins, “Don't be jealous, you snob.” Here again, where W. and N. inform us that they “walked over from Keswick, *cum equis*, were much pleased with the scenery and the lamb chops; and washed in the stream behind the house.” Number One remarks, “Bad Latin,” as information to the illiterate; but upon the whole he prefers to confine himself to writing the words “Shut up!” wherever he considers a

visitor's remarks have exceeded their proper limit.

Almost everybody laments the want of beer at Wastdale Head. Poor William Ritson is very particular in denying us this luxury since an infamous exciseman's wife pretending to faint, in order to get a drop of malt liquor out of him, informed against her host, and got him fined twenty pounds; one person even bewails the lack of beer in immortal verse, or verses :

“There was a farm house at Wastdale,
Where the one thing they wanted was ale ;
You could have milk and water,
But not ale and porter,
At that snug little house in Wastdale.”

But there are weak brethren, too, upon the other side of the question, who, in soberest prose, “are glad to find a village without a public-house in it, yet affording such good entertainment for man and horse.”

The best of all the remarks, perhaps, and the most to the purpose is that of Joseph W., Liverpool, who informs us that “Parties at a loss for a bell in the parlour, will find the attendant tractable when whistled on !” With which the Visitors' Book concludes.

Towards evening the whole population — about

thirty souls — repaired to a small green field in the centre of the vast mountain amphitheatre, to take part in, or be spectators of the games. There was a great deal of good practise wrestling, and we ourselves were very good-naturedly initiated by the Wastdale youth in the seven scientific ways of being thrown. Young John Ritson took us all — one down another come on — and felled us all, very satisfactorily. He is a rising athlete in these parts, and exhibited to us several belts he had gained at various neighbouring meetings, of which his father seemed to be to the full as proud as he. Jumping, too, we had, of a rare kind, the performers starting with a couple of huge stones, which they cast from them just as they made their spring, in order to give them an extra impetus; and we also had jumping on all fours, — an importation into Wastdale of our own, and one which very much delighted the aborigines.

Not till the giant shadows of the western fells had slanted across the little field, and presently filled all the vale with gloom, did we leave that merry scene, which was undisfigured by drunkenness or quarrel; then, gladly vacating our stately parlour, we joined the good folks in the kitchen for

the remainder of the evening, with their pipes and — tea. Very pleasant were the tales William Ritson told us of beck and fell, new and interesting of themselves, and not the less attractive because now and then we were obliged to ask the meaning of a term or two — better Saxon than we Southerners knew how to speak. He told us many a story of old Seawfell Top yonder, whereon the Sappers built their nests at survey time, which once were blown about their ears at midnight, so suddenly that the whole sixteen men came stumbling, how they could, through storm and darkness, down to Wastdale Head, transformed to Highlanders — without their nether garments. After this, they built their stations on the Pikes, one upon each side, so that they might change their quarters with the wind; but in later times, the soldiers lived below, and only climbed up to their eyrie in the day-time; one of whom, by long custom, was wont to ascend those three steep cragset miles in sixty minutes, and to descend in forty. Years ago, a sergeant, who had been employed here upon survey, and had marked how solitary a spot the hamlet was, deserting from his regiment afterwards, came to this lone valley with

wife and child, and dwelt there for a great space of time, after which he leisurely crossed the seas.

Then we had descriptions — such as I have sometimes read in old books of pastimes — of fox and hare-hunting among the fells, and in particular of hunting the sweetmart, which is a sort of polecat without the unpleasant smell. Best of all, perhaps, were the incidents of mountain travel in the winter times. How statesmen — that is, small farmers, such as Ritson himself — and shepherds had alike to explore the perilous icy fells for sheep, cragfast or injured; and still better how, when one of their small society was missing, or behind his expected time, the whole dale would sally out with lights, and searching for him diligently over these inhospitable hills, nor often to fail to find him.

“Surely,” said we, “if a man fell down Pease Gill, or any such place it would be useless enough to go to look for him.”

“Nay, but,” said William, “one of our folk did fall there when I was a young chap, and I helped to fetch him home.”

The poor fellow had set off to look after his sheep upon Scawfell, and did not return at

evening; therefore, four men, his neighbours in the scriptural sense, turned out into the snow and night with lanterns, and tracked his footmarks up the very beekside we had gone that morning, and along the shelving bank bordering the chasm, at the brink of which the footmarks ceased. Then they knew he had fallen over, and must needs be a dead man; but still, retracing their steps a little, they struggled up the icy beck until they found spots of blood upon it, and blood upon the snow, and soon the man himself, insensible, and with fractured skull, but not without breath; his iron boot-heel had caught in a cleft as he descended, and, though torn right off from the sole, had greatly broken his fall. The four men got a ladder, carried him home, as if upon a bier, and sent some sixteen miles or so for the nearest doctor. The life of the man was saved, so that he lived ten years afterwards, although such had been the shock that he was never rightly "his sell" any more.

CRAG-FAST.

AN ADVENTURE IN THE LANGDALES.

We have lived so long, my brother Frank and I, in the grand hill-country of the north, that its gray giants have long ceased to be held by us in awe; our reverence for them is not one whit diminished, but our fear is fled. Their crowns, hidden in cloud, their huge fern-covered shoulders, their mighty girdles of melancholy pine, are our glory still, but are no more threatening than their slopes of pasture-land, and woods that stray down to the margin of the lakes. Even in winter-time, unless the hill-fog be hanging thickly, or the blinding snow be whirling, we should not hesitate to cross the highest gap in Westmorland, or find our way to Keswick by the fells. From our nearest mountain-top we can see the road to it, and track it almost all the way, bridging the rivers and fording the rills, and winding round mere after mere, until, a thin white streak, it climbs the furthest ridge,

and comes, we know, unawares on the little town. As the crow flies, we are not ten miles from it; but a man cannot reach it in eighteen miles, nor a horse in twenty-eight. Many a time, since Harry left us, have Frank and I gone thither and returned in the same day, partly to get little luxuries that are not in our far-way mountain home; partly from the exceeding beauty of the way itself; and partly, it may be, to keep his memory green who is no longer with us.

A score of summers have brought bird and butterfly into our happy valley, and set the bee a-roaming on the hills since last our Harry took that walk with us—but we do not forget it. The fair June morn, the quarter which the gentle breeze blew from, the coombs wherein the shadows of the clouds lay—we remember all. Harry was beautiful, which we are far from being, kind and accomplished almost as a girl; but he was weak in health, and had to battle for dear life through every winter. Supple of limb when well, and strong in spirit whether well or ill, he wanted care, and we were not good nurses. We did not lack in love, but in “the reason firm, the temperate will,” which have

been so often found of late in the gentler sex, soothing, controlling, saving so many of their soldier brethren. What our poor brother fixed his wishes on, we had no heart to refuse. He was, we felt, and everybody but himself knew well, but for a little while on earth, and not, therefore, to be denied a pleasure lightly. He would walk to Keswick—that he had determined on—the next time Fred and Frank went, and designing there to sleep that night, we suffered him one day to go with us. We chose our time during a series of unbroken fine weather; no rain had fallen for weeks throughout the district—“fair” said the shepherd’s weather-glass, and “fair” said Michael Gwain, the shepherd, when we started that morning, we two with knapsacks, and Harry with his alpenstock, up the bed of the empty beck. It had been rifled of its silver treasure by the sun, and the crags stood out bare and smooth where the waters had roamed at will. Silence had usurped the seat of song; and the stones that had held their summits highest above the strife, like many a human head that proudly lifts itself above the battle of the world, displayed their stubborn

breasts, riven and worn enough. Two deep-cut channels alone marked the spot where the twin torrents had lately met; and a little tree that overhung it, and was wont to be kept green by the rainbow-tinted spray, was dying fast; the mighty stepping-stones, fit each to cover a hero's grave, were useless, and felt no footsteps. It was dry even beneath the little bridge where the trout were used to make their ceaseless circles in the pool; the dead fish were lying on either side in their beautiful armour, never more to slumber in the brown depths, or to wag a lazy fin upon the surface; they had trusted to have escaped the evil eye of the sun. One by one, the sheep wandered up and down with piteous bleat, and we ourselves, with head inclined and hollowed hand, could find no drop of water.

Our progress up the broken way was slow, and on the steep path beside it the parching earth was hot beneath our feet; and the fern, the moss-knots, and the heather, crumbled into dust within our grasp. One of us has reached the summit; that shout of triumph carried over the hills proclaims it, and that one is Harry;

because he had less breath to lose than any of us, he must of course needs scramble up the first, and hollo. And indeed there is something glorifying in having gained the top of a high hill; when the breeze and the mountain first blows on a man's brow, one may generally know it by other signs that a mere ruddy cheek; the voice is more still than usual, but what beauty or wisdom it has to speak we seem to get there above all places; the freshness that falls on the senses sheds dew on the heart, and the thoughts that lie deepest spring up and blossom into speech; the world's cares and crosses seem all left below, and fade away far in the distance, while beneath us is spread the glory of the earth. When to us the town lies in silence, and the sail turns not on the hill—when the spade, the pick, and the clanging factory send up no murmur—when the glancing river moves not on, and the oar of the sailor is dumb, and thronged city and desolate sea alike give forth no sound. From the Isle of Man in the far west-ward, and along the open sparkling sea, our eyes came back to the dear valley at our feet, the tranquil lake with its green-wooded islets, wherein

another heaven seemed to smile, another sun to shine; the rich low meadows round it sprinkled thickly with cattle, the farms of dazzling whiteness, the low-roofed cottages of unmortered stone, and the vane of the grey old church beaming above the slumbrous yews like fire. All men may not be moved so, but I think it is thus with most of us who think; and it was so certainly on that day with our poor Harry: never was he so animated, enthusiastic, eloquent as then; we might have almost known, had we been long enough in the old north country to imbibe its creeds, that mischief was therefore in store for him. On we went, mile after mile, over the dry morasses, where the streams no longer pushed their sluggish way through the black mould, and the tufts of heath were withering. We lay down often under some huge crag,—from which the goat fled, scared, or the rock-raven slowly oared herself away on mighty lustrous wings—to rest, for the heat had become intense. Panting on the short brown grass, with our faces heavenward, was as good as lotos-eating; the warmth of noon and the quiet of night reigned jointly upon those lofty

heights, where the murmur of the bee alone seemed to thread the silence.

Here we passed strange-shaped crags, which once, the legend went, were mortal men tranced by wizard spell; here, rock-rent chasms, where the fiend was said to dwell in winter-time; and here we came upon some desolate tarn, needing not romance to heighten its lonely terrors — where Solitude seemed sister to Despair. Meanwhile, the faint air had no breath save that which came in fitful feverish gasps, and died away; the blue sky became islanded above us by a huge black cloud, and our thirst grew unsupportable. After a rest somewhat longer than usual, we caught the glimmer of a falling stream, some half-mile off, but separated from us by uneven and rugged ground. And “Who drinks first?” exclaimed Harry; and “I,” and “I,” we answered, and each took his own way with a cheer, and started at racing speed for the welcome gill.

By this time the last wandering cloud had joined the threatening mass that hung swollen and dark above us, like an impersonation of wrath; and one instant the sunlight gleamed

over the landscape, and the next, the shadow overcast it, as a fever flushes a sick man's brow. Mountain-top could not be discerned from cloud, and the blackness of night was gathering, when on a sudden the heaven burst into flame, and the earth glared and reddened to meet it. The pent-up thunder broke forth at the same instant, and rolled out again and again before the first echoes had died away upon the hills. A few big drops fell upon my forehead, and then a living wall of rain moved swiftly against me. It fairly beat my breath out, and I could hardly raise my eyes to see the glory of the tempest, the sheet after sheet of lightning which seemed to wrap the dead earth round, while the thunder hymned its terrible requiem.

Faint, weary, and wet as I was, a great joy seemed to depart when the storm ceased, which it did almost at once and without slackening; for never had I seen Dame Nature in a more awful mood; scarce ever, too, under a more lovely aspect than when the sun smote through the cloud-rack, throwing broad veils of silver over the green hillsides, and setting great crowns of pearls upon their heads; intertwining the hair

of the pine-woods with strings of diamonds, and awakening a thousand becks which ran straight to the valleys in song. Frank was already at the goal, and welcomed me with shouts of triumph. He had taken across the marsh as I had done, but by a shorter track. Harry, who had chosen the outer edge of the table-land, along the cliffs, had not yet come. We waited for some time impatiently, for the afternoon was by this time far advanced; and when we went back to seek for him, it was with beating hearts. Neither whispered to the other his secret fear; but we read it plainly enough in each other's eyes. What if that glad laugh-music should be never heard again? if those noble eyes should be glazed in death, and the beautiful face be marred by those cruel cliffs? and with the thought arose the look of his fond mother in the hour when we should bring her lifeless darling home! Not till we had peered down every cliff and gill, and searched over the treacherous bog in vain, did Frank, with a face I shall never quite forget, approach the verge of the precipice. If our Harry had fallen there, indeed all hope was over. But no; thank

God, there was no terrible thing in that green valley — no one dread spot, such as I once have seen, whereon the eye is riveted at once — a knot of clothes, with the evil birds clanging around it. We took the same perilous path which the lost boy had taken, where the height above and the depth below were a burden to our brain, and presently we found the narrow footway broken down before us. It must have been a daring foot that would trust itself to leap to the other side, and but a slight form whose weight could have there alighted in safety. A few feet further on, the goat-track — for it was nothing more — was resumed, and rounded, out of our sight, an enormous rock. Frank was foremost, and leaped the chasm without an instant's thought. No courage, no self-sacrifice, could have induced any man to do so who had hesitated for a moment. The ground gave way with him, and he fell his whole length down, still clinging by his hands, however, to the firmer part. Agile and wary as a panther, he had done his best to guard against this danger by coming down on all-fours. I hid my eyes in terror as he clung spasmodically for a few

seconds, and collected all his strength for a spring upwards; and when I looked again, he was in comparative safety. There was an impassable barrier of some eighteen feet of sheer precipice between him and me. He rounded the point before him, and a cry of gladness assured me that he had at least found Harry alive. I clambered back again with difficulty, to see if I could get down to them from above, but it was out of the question. The great rock jutted out right over them, and there was no pathway round it from the other side at all. Whether the track had ever been continued further, I could not tell, but it now led clearly into a complete *cul de sac*, from which there was no escape unless by wings.

To be starved to death, or to be dashed down the steep by the first wind, seemed to be the inevitable fate of my poor brothers. Frank's voice came up from the abyss, and somewhat calmed me. "Harry has fainted with terror," he said; "I have no doubt his head failed him at this spot. We cannot round the rock again from hence, but there is room enough to stand, and even to sit here, for both of us. Do you,

Fred, go down to Borrowdale at once, before it gets dark, and bring up with you at daylight half-a-dozen strong men, and all the sheep-ropes you can get together; and pray Heaven send us a calm night, and that our Harry may yet be preserved to us."

With a heart-felt injunction to the brave fellow to be of good courage, and to rely on me, I started on my errand of life and death. A frantic anxiety urged me to fly like the wind, and the most dangerous paths seemed to have lost all their terrors; but one false step, or even a slip which sprained an ankle, would be, I knew, destruction to those dear ones on the steep; so I chose my way with caution, and did not reach the valley till dusk. The greatest eagerness and sympathy were at once manifested; we collected plenty of the great cables used to extricate the crag-fast sheep, and came up with the earliest streaks of light in great company. We could see the rock plainly enough from Borrowdale, but not the two figures crouching under it; no heath-flower bloomed above it, nor bush nor tree over its stern seamed visage; while its wrinkled brows seemed to overhang the height with a

consciousness of cruel power. It was not so easy, however, to find it from above; and having omitted to leave a man below to direct us, we wasted some precious minutes. At last we came upon the spot, and heard brother Frank cry out to us in a sad voice: "He is alive, for he still breathes; but that is all."

The dreadful hours passed in company with his poor charge had evidently shaken even his fortitude. It was arranged that many smaller ropes should be taken down with the rescuer, in case they needed both to be secured to the cables. We twisted three of these last, for greater security, into one. No one opposed my natural entreaty to be permitted to be lowered first; but I saw the shepherds shaking their heads, as if they doubted my being of much service. Ten or a dozen attached themselves to the end of the tether, and I was fastened to the other, in a loop, which formed a sort of seat. A long staff was given me to keep myself off the face of the precipice, and then they let me drop downward. Lower and lower, and out of their sight, I sank slowly, but not without much motion. It required all my attention

to prevent dashing against the crags: if I pushed off gently, I hit them again at once; if I gave a bold thrust, I was turned round, and flung upon them backwards. Presently I sank below the level of the rock under which my brothers lay, and saw them. Harry was resting in the other's lap, with a corpse-like face, and quite motionless, as one to whom no hurt could happen more, and whom no power could save. Frank kept his eyes toward the stone and away from the dizzy height, and he did but glance at me for an instant, and then resumed his position. "Get back, Frederick; get back, for the love of Heaven. Let the best shepherd amongst them take your place; and even then, I fear we two shall never see home again." And indeed it required far more skill than I could boast of to get such a momentum as might carry me into the crevice, and still less could I have snatched a hold that might have sustained me there. I gave the signal to haul me up, and told the men how matters stood. "Was Mr. Frank sufficiently master of himself, and safely situated, to draw a man in by one of the lesser ropes, if such could be thrown to him?"

they asked. I answered "No," and it seemed greatly to disconcert them. The lightest and most agile of the party, however, volunteered to do his best, and over he went, as I had done. He required much more rope this time, in order to get a sufficient swing on it for his purpose; and those who were not engaged in holding fast could see him strike out and return to the face of the cliff quite clearly. After one or two tremendous strains, the rope suddenly slackened, and we knew that he had found foothold somewhere underneath. I don't pretend to say how it was done, for it seems to me to this day to have been a miracle of mercy: I only know that the next haul of ours brought up the shepherd with Harry yet alive, within his arms; and again, that the fine fellow was let down, and came up with my good, brave Frank in safety. He was not much less changed to look at than his charge. Anxiety and despair had done, it seemed, the work of years with him; and we had to carry the one, and lead the other's uncertain footsteps home.

Weeks passed away before the strong man grew himself again; and for the delicate boy, a sick-

room was his prison for months. The exposure to the night-air, after the pelting storm, had overtaken his lungs, and his sleep was long disturbed by what he had suffered; his thin white fingers would clutch at empty air, in dreams, and his brows grow damp at the imaginary abyss that seemed to yawn beneath him. The events of that awful time indeed, haunted his memory by day and night to the last; but he never recalled them without the deepest thankfulness. "I die among you all," he said, "safe, — safe, dear Frank, at home." And he left us before the winter came, when all the beautiful things were decaying and about to perish likewise. For us, although we yield to none, by this time, in tracking the wild fox to his lair, and the raven to her lofty nest, we never pass that rock upon the Fells without some awe; nor without a thought, I trust, of the great Providence which there was manifested, whereof the ungraven steep itself stands an eternal witness.

FEATS AT THE FERRY.

In this or that Hall of Arms, or sporting Arena in London, we have sometimes been witnesses of athletic entertainments stated to be prevalent in the north country, and we must confess that they struck us as being wearisome to the last degree: the sawdusted circle, the gas-lights, and the roar of the streets without, were circumstances perhaps too adverse for the proper appreciation of pastoral gymnastics; but certainly the heroes of Cumberland and Westmorland gained little, as it seemed to us, by contrast even with the Whitechapel or Finsbury pets of the legitimate ring. Had we never known the beautiful sister counties save by report, we should have lived and died at St. John's Wood in the belief that their favourite sport was brutal and debasing, and the champions of their valleys mercenary gladiators — which would have been a great mistake indeed. That by reason of the

frequency of wrestling meetings in the north, and of the increased value of the prizes, there are now a distinct race of professionals who live by the gladiatorial exercise of their thews and sinews, is quite true; it is very possible that amongst these men the bubble reputation may be held in less repute than a ten-pound note, and that various little arrangements may be made beforehand to the advantage of their privy purses and to the prejudice of honest and fair "felling;" but their case is quite exceptional. Most of our northern athletes are used simply to make holiday, and leave their sheep-tending, or inn-keeping, or village trade for a few hours in order to enter their names at some neighbouring meeting, and to take their chance of being in the last two or three rounds (for which proportional rewards are given), or among the sixteen last standers, or of even getting the champion's belt. Besides these public sports there are local ones of constant occurrence in every valley, however small, for the north country population is far better off than that of the south, and has plenty of leisure to enjoy its favourite amusement. Each hero of his own hamlet, therefore, in venturing to such

places as Carlisle or Ulverston, is certain of not being altogether unknown, and of getting supported by his little band of admirers; nay, so strong are these local attachments that not only are all Cumberland ready to set their lives upon the issue against a Westmorland man, and *vice versa*, but two coming from the same place will generally refuse to wrestle at all, and he who is considered the better man is "laid down" to, and "stands" fresh and ready for more alien opponents. No dale, far hidden and set amidst the barrenest crags, is so poor but that it furnishes its belt of good broad leather with iron or steel buckle for a prize at feast-time, which the statemen of the north are wont to wear as proudly, and to win, at least as honestly, as those of Downing Street their ribbons and garters. Almost every farm-house has its heirlooms of this kind, and we have seen grandfather, son, and grandson sitting in their eating-room with these trophies, fresh and fading, of the three generations, suspended from the dark wood panelling behind them.

As the circumstances which attend these sports in the towns must needs materially detract from

their usefulness, and from the enjoyment to be derived from them, so, in the lake country, their every accessory seems to heighten what is pleasant in them, and to increase the gratification of the spectator. The fine bracing character of the air—the open air—in which the sports are held; the exceeding beauty, in almost every case, of the scenery surrounding the place of meeting; the perfect good humour which prevails among the many combatants, and the scientific knowledge and intense interest exhibited by the lookers-on, unite in making these mountain revels matters very different indeed from the scenes of the prize-ring or the race-course.

There is not, we believe, a more beautiful prospect in all England than that afforded from the Ferry Ring on Windermere, as we sit on its rude wooden stand, and look straight out to northward; six miles of the broad blue lake lie immediately beneath us, gemmed with innumerable wooded islets, and sprinkled with countless sails, for there is a regatta on the water to please the ladies (who rarely honour the wrestlers with their presence), and for those weaker brethren who prefer acuatics. How fair looks she who

is well named Belle Isle, with that fine timber skirting her curving bays; and Lilly Holm yonder,—what a fit garden is it for the loveliest of flowers! What mighty woods to westward clothe all those swelling hills to the water's edge, made doubly large by their reflection in the stilly depths! How statelily beyond, at the lake's head, is marshalled that great mountain host with its mighty flanks, far undulating on either side! What a queen looks Fairfield—serene and emerald-crowned—and how fitly Langdale Pikes, themselves right royal, are guarding those shut mountain gales, within which reigns, invisible, Scawfell, their king. There is music rising from below upon the lake, and echoing sweet and far, and voices singing which awaken, away in the grey hills' solitudes, snatches of broken melody. Afar, the grandeur of the mountain world, and near, the beauty of the lake with wooded isles! What would we more of nature? As for man—in this small ring before us, the foreground of the picture—there will be seen as splendid specimens of strength and form as Britain boasts of; the vigour of sinew, the shifts of suppleness, can be no further

exercised than we shall see them used this day. The light-weights — those that are under eleven stone — will wrestle first this morning: a man who can but just get into them, has, of course, the better chance of doing well both in them and in the heavies also, than one less sturdy.

“Nay, you’re over weight, John, by two pounds,” says the clerk of the ring, to some candidate seated in the weighing scale, who smiles good-naturedly, and takes of nearly everything, but still is not quite qualified; he puts, therefore, a couple of great-coats on, and takes a run in the road by the lake’s side, whereby, his too solid flesh being melted and dissolved into a dew, he comes to scale a light-weight after all. Their names being entered, to the number, perhaps, of forty pairs, each of them is written on a slip of paper and thrown into a hat, from which they are drawn at hazard, two at a time, by village children. The pair thus selected have to wrestle together; but when a novice finds himself opposed to a very good man, he will often “lay down,” and give up his modicum of chance at once, whereupon the other receives his ticket from the official, just as though he had “felled” his adver-

sary in the ring. There are a great many "lay downs" in the first round, so that the wrestling gets select, and very much improves as it proceeds. The third round comprehends therefore (unless in the case of some accidental defeat) a score of the best men; they strip to their drawers and flannel waistcoats, exhibiting such studies for the painter and the sculptor as are rarely seen elsewhere. They shake hands before commencing, in token of amity, nor, indeed, in the thick of the strain and the struggle, while the face of each is over the shoulder of the other, and every muscle is exerted to the utmost, do these fine fellows exhibit any trace of savageness or personal animosity.

Two umpires, Nestors of the wrestling-ring, walk slowly round the combatants, and observe them narrowly, nor is their decision ever impugned by the losing man. While the pair are taking hold, gratuitous advice is offered to them freely by their friends who sit or stand around the Pit; but when they grapple, a perfect torrent of "bonnie Carels" or "bonnie Kendals," as the case may be, cleaves all the air. Then they strive, then they strain, shoulder to shoulder, neck to neck,

and at last touch ground perhaps so nearly at the same instant, as to require the most practised eye to award the fall; or, whirling circularly as in Fakir dance, are cast violently to earth apart; or one across the victor's thigh comes heels over head, and measures all his inches upon the greensward with a thud. This last fall is the only dangerous one, and that only in case of very heavy weights and of indifferent performers. Good wrestlers very rarely hurt one another. This quiet-looking giant by our side, who has been champion often and often—and will be so again this day, although he is nearly forty, and more than twelve years past the wrestler's prime—has never, in his twenty years' experience, once been hurt. He won his first man's belt when a lad of sixteen years old, and in his house across the lake yonder—a clean, neat little inn set in a wilderness of flowers—has no less than one hundred and seventy-four of these wrestling zones; of all colours they are, and of all descriptions, from the broad plain Manchester-looking belt, won at that matter-of-fact and unornamental town, to the splendid award of Newcastle, embossed with the silver towers. Besides the

mere leather (although there is nothing like it) there is, of course, a very considerable prize in money, averaging perhaps, twenty pounds; lesser pecuniary rewards are proportionally distributed among the less successful combatants, and besides these a subscription prize is commonly made up by the stewards or spectators, for which the sixteen last standers wrestle over again. Between the light and heavy weights matches (which are generally upon following days) there are all sorts of other amusements; running matches, for a mile or so; dog trails; jumping matches, for which not only the aborigines enter, but usually several visitors, university men and the like, who, reckoning upon the iron-shod boots and rough appearance of the natives, are surprised to find them, when stripped, as lithe and active as themselves, and indeed a trifle more so; "the strangers" are, of course, a lighter set of men for the most part than even the light-weight wrestlers. There is "jingling" also, a sport which consists in blind-folding a number of men and turning them out in the arena, which has been previously strewed with sacks full of sawdust, to pursue some fleet-footed athlete, who carries a bell. It is great

fun to watch these unfortunates taking accurate bearings of the sacks before they are blinded, and then to see the pitiless officials set those impediments, totally afresh, besides turning each performer three times round at the commencement of the game. But the most graceful of all the feats at the ferry is the pole-leaping. Two lofty uprights are set up with a light shifting bail that is raised an inch at a time by pegs, the first height being about seven feet. Each candidate has three several trials, if it be necessary, at each new position of the bar, and as it gets loftier, the competitors of course get fewer and fewer. It is pleasant to see the care which each man takes to fix upon the precise spot where his hand must clasp the pole in order to clear the desired height; how, girding himself up for the run, he rises perhaps to the requisite height, but, unlike vaulting ambition, comes down on the same side; or gets over the bail, but somehow brings it down along with him; or actually clears it, falling no matter on what portion of his body, whence he leaps up instantly to join in the universal cheer. When it is a candidate's last chance of three, his trial becomes of course

proportionally exciting; shouts of encouragement greet him upon all sides, and the women, if he be a bonnie laddie, often shed tears in their enthusiasm. We once saw a youth fail twice at nine feet five inches, and so on to nine feet eight, always managing, however, to clear the bar when it came to his final chance. He was an inferior leaper to more than one of his conquered opponents, and only gained his place by pluck.

The heavy weight wrestlers generally close these amusements; if the others were Apollos, each of these is surely a Hercules; their grip is like the hug of a bear. The champion here, who was so good as to show us how to "take hold," the other day, in his garden, has left his mark indelibly on our back, besides having compressed our ribs so that we cannot breathe right yet. It has come to the last round by this time; our giant friend has got but one foe to deal with—a true son of Anak, as tall if not so big as himself—and he has got his work cut out for him, say the old hands; but success has made him somewhat over bold; how quietly he suffers those mighty arms to be placed around him, and

those strong fingers to feel like one in the dark for a certain hold. Now they have gripped at an advantage, and the foe is only waiting for him to have hold likewise. "He has holt! he has holt!" see how they grapple and strain. "Bonnie Robson!" "Bonnie Longmire!" cry the spectators, so interested this time in the individuals as to call them by their own names instead of by the localities from which they come. "Three to two on Langmire! two to one! five to —— Langmire's down! Robson's felled him! Bonnie Robson!" And indeed it was so; very quiet, but very grim, our giant looked. "It is the best of three for the last round," quoth he, as he took up earth in his hands to prevent them slipping, reminding us of the preparatory horn practice which the bull indulges himself in on the turf before he charges. This time it is two to one on Robson, who is indeed a very good man, but he is felled nevertheless, and the third time he is likewise felled after a struggle such as the old Greek gods were wont to delight in, sitting above the thunder on Olympus top; or the Roman Caesars, little less divine, in that great wrestler's ring by the Eternal City. So our giant friend

has won his one hundred and seventy-fifth girdle, and is champion after all.

How the twilight is falling in the long valleys yonder, though the western hills wear still their golden crowns, and how coolly comes the lake wind through the island trees as we embark in the huge ferry-boat, and steer for the wooded promontory on the other shore. It was from thence that in the dark stormy night the evil voice called "Boat," which the poor ferryman obeyed so fatally. No passenger was there, but some sight — no one knows what — which sent him back with bloodless face and dumb, to die next day. (The owls call "Boat" there yet, but not the fiend, who has been exorcised and laid in the wood quarry by the priest of Chapel Isle years and years ago.) Of all the feats at the Ferry that is the only one which we hope will not yearly be repeated.

A TREMENDOUS ASCENT.

My name is Robinson ; and I think I must be somehow connected with that well-known traveller who, in conjunction with his two friends, Brown and Jones, made the celebrated foreign tour which Mr. Doyle so kindly illustrated for them. I think so, because, besides the coincidence of name, I have the like passionate love of adventure, tempered with the same peculiar appreciation of comfort, as he ; and although circumstances, over which I have no control, and about which it would be an impertinence in the public to enquire, have restricted my rambles to my native country, my experiences, like his, may not be altogether uninteresting.

If there is something attractive in the mere appearance of a person who has been up Mont Blanc — disappointing as it is, we must confess, not to find him taller than other people — there must be an interest, although perhaps in a lesser

degree, attaching to one who has scaled Helvellyn. If, upon the topmost peak of Cotopaxi, it astonished the philosophic traveller to discover "butterflies and other insects, which must," he supposes, "have been conveyed there by unusual currents of air;" and if the whole scientific world were similar wonder-struck to hear it, it must surely awaken some surprise when the statement is made public that I too have observed the same phenomenon on the summit of Skiddaw, although I may not have attributed it to so abstruse a cause. These things, it may be urged, however, are solely matters of comparison; and for the sake of argument, suppose this to be admitted. Let Humboldt upon his pinnacle, let Smith upon his glacier, be by all means duly honoured; but refuse not to Robinson, upon his British mountain-top, his humbler meed of approbation too. But, indeed, this is but a low view to take on such a matter after all. When the mathematician, with his reading-party in North Wales, apologised for not climbing Snowdon, upon the ground that there was a hill behind his residence quite high enough for all practical purposes, he enunciated a mighty truth. I am

not, indeed, a mathematician, but I appreciate his remark in all its depth and fullness. Helvellyn and Skiddaw are quite sufficient for all my humble needs; Mont Blanc and Cotopaxi would be very considerably too high. Is it pretended that the sensations of a poor fellow, climbing a steep place in Westmorland, are different from those of another poor fellow going through the same sort of thing in Switzerland? Did Mr. Albert Smith, think you, approaching the *Grands Mulets*, perspire more freely than I did in my ascent of Grisedale Pass, before I met the donkey? I was fourteen stone when I began that expedition from Grasmere, and I was twelve stone and a-half when I was brought down thither, that same evening, upon the back of that friendly animal. Such a fact as this needs no comment. Was the Alpine excursionist blistered with much walking? I also can procure the testimony—in writing, if it be necessary—of my two sons, as to the awful condition of their father's feet. Was he drowsy, and did he, towards the conclusion of his labours, tumble upon this side and upon that, like a drunken man? Ask my guide, Gawain Mackareth of Town End, if he did not, upon

the occasion to which I refer, pick me up four distinct times; besides pouring upon me a continued fire of "Now then, sir"s, and "Hold up, sir"s, for the last two miles! No human being, not excepting Mr. Smith, could possibly have endured more or worse things in his experience than I in mine. I claim, therefore, to be heard. Again, can it in any way increase the risk to a person of my habit of body, or indeed to any person, if, in case of a false step, he has to fall a sheer seven thousand feet perpendicular, instead of seven hundred? And as to the magnificence of the prospect at a great elevation, am I to be told that the power of vision is always proportionably extended to suit it? I saw all I was able to see from the height I am about to refer to; and there was still a great deal more beyond, could I have availed myself of nature's superabundant offer. Had there been twenty times that extra prospect extended for my gaze, what benefit would that have been to me? I suffered all I could, I saw all I could, and I got to the very top of my mountain. What conditions of ascent then, I demand to know, have remained unfulfilled? Relying therefore, upon the great

success at Egyptian Hall, I appeal to the everlasting principles of justice, and to that love of fair-play which is said to actuate the British heart, in requesting of the general public a wide circulation and a considerable popularity for the following particulars of *my* tremendous ascent — of Fairfield.

It is not my intention to emulate the majority of my predecessors who have published memorials of this sort, in giving a detailed history of my birth and education, and (especially) of the social position of the Robinson family in bygone times, but I will begin at once with the circumstances of the adventure itself. A few summers since, I was staying with three friends, whose modesty demands their still remaining unknown characters as X, Y, Z, at Ambleside, in the heart of the lake-country. We four had come from Manchester to “do” the mountain-district, and had done it thoroughly. X had killed a pony (which very nearly killed him first) upon Scawfell; Y had been almost drowned in Windermere through attempting to swim with corks on, and letting go the corks; Z, who was a naturalist, but did not know much about mountaineering, had been benighted on

Wansfell from the unforeseen circumstance of the sun leaving the hill-top after it has left the sides. He had found, early in his ramble, a very rare and curious beetle, which he had wrapped up carefully in his waistcoat-pocket; but while roaming about in the darkness, hunger had overpowered love of science; and after much hesitation, he had devoured the specimen. Having got down to Ambleside at last, however, he declared this to have been the sublimest adventure possible, and proposed our spending a night together upon the summit of some other steep, a suggestion which we unanimously applauded; only I insisted that the thing should be done comfortably. "None of your rare and curious beetles for supper for me," said I; "none of your rocky pillows, and slumbers under the canopy of heaven: Joseph Robinson goes up like a gentleman," I gave them distinctly to understand, "or he doesn't go up at all." It was therefore arranged that I should have the sole charge of the commissariat. As for the mountain, we determined at once that that should be Fairfield. It is about 3,000 feet above the level of the sea; and we proposed to sleep upon the summit of its huge green back. The news

spread like wild-fire through the little village ; offers of service poured in from every quarter — guides, lanterns (even a boat from one person, who thought it would be a very snug affair turned upside down), ponies, mules — camels would, I doubt not, have been forthcoming, had we desired them — everything we wanted, and many things of which we had no need, were pressed upon us eagerly. We had already an alpenstock apiece (which for my own part, since it is for ever getting between my legs and tripping me up, I do not consider an assistance), and a railway-rug ; and the landlord of our hotel provided the provisions. These were the chief of the necessaries which my sagacity procured for our night-bivouac and tremendous ascent : thirty-six bottles of bitter beer, two bottles of gin, two bottles of sherry, one gallon of water, four loaves of bread, one leg of lamb, one leg of mutton, two fowls, one tongue, half-pound of cigars, four carriage-lamps, and two packs of playing-cards. We had also a large tent, which was carried upon the back of a horse. Three men were necessary to pitch this tabernacle and to carry the provisions. About five o'clock in the afternoon we started for the mountain

with a huge train of admirers, forming the largest cavalcade that had ever left Ambleside before. But most of our camp-followers quitted us at the foot of Nab Sear, at Rydal, where the tremendous ascent was to begin.

For the first quarter of an hour our way lay amongst trees and green fields, but after that, vegetation began to grow scanty, and soon even the hardy fir-trees disappeared; however, it was very well to have dispensed with the stone-walls, which have a habit in this region of leaning over upon the side which you wish to climb, and of falling bodily upon you as soon as you eling hold of their topmost layer. It is easier to squeeze through the holes made beneath them for the sheep; and very good fun, after one is safe, to watch an elongated body, such as Y, come creeping behind, half in one field and half in another, and casting a not uninterested eye above him, to see whether the wall is about cutting him in two or not. A few sheep are still sprinkled about our path, but the cows are left far beneath. A rook or two from Rydal woods flaps by us, but these will soon cease, to be exchanged for the sliding buzzard, with his huge brown wings, whose plaintive cry is even

now piercing our ears from the upper heights.

Otherwise, there is no sound, except the laborious puffing of your humble servant and his three companions, and that abominable "tramp, tramp" of the porters, which never tires, and which leaves us so hopelessly behind. At every step, some novel beauty opens upon us, if we had but time to look at it; but as soon as X or Y calls our attention to the same, and our backs are turned, they make use of that infamous advantage to get on forty yards in advance; so Z and I only look straight before us, and wait patiently for the panorama which we know we shall get at the top. Presently, we spy a fresh green mound of the softest turf, and X cannot resist the temptation to rest his tired limbs. No sooner has he seated himself, when up go his legs and arms into the air, and down goes that portion of his person which gravity attracts into the treacherous bog. He is doubled up into the form of a V, and presents a ridiculous appearance; and when he is taken out and straightened, wet through, and brown and green, he is not a less laughable spectacle. If we had been bound together with ropes, as persons ought always to be, it seems, on these tremendous

excursions, this accident could not have occurred.

The tourist who has only climbed such hills as Loughrigg and Helm Crag can have no conception of the terrors of the heights at which we had now arrived. The frightful rock-rent chasms on all sides of us; the scarcely less dangerous grassy slopes, upon which, had I set my foot, I am morally convinced I should have rolled over and over like a football to the very bottom of the valley; the hideous shapes of the crags themselves, and the awful barren tracts that lay before us still to be crossed, whose northern sides were sheer tremendous precipices. We felt, however, the greatest confidence in our attendants, who — such is the power of habit in familiarising men to the most perilous situations — were whistling popular melodies throughout the journey; and perceiving the horse in particular to take the matter with great coolness and philosophy, X, Y, Z, and myself were not slow, in the more difficult places, to adopt his fashion of proceeding upon all fours. At last we reached the topmost of the humps or *aiguilles* of Fairfield, a little beyond which we had determined to fix our tent. Here we caught the sound of a fowling-piece, fired off at Ambleside, no doubt

in exultation at our success; and X acknowledged the compliment by tying his pocket-handkerchief on to his umbrella, and waving it three times.

While the guides were employed in arrangements for our comfort and refreshment, we walked to the very topmost plane of the mountain, and gave ourselves up unrestrainedly to the enjoyment of the poetry of our position. One of the porters, a very trusty man of the name of White, had been up twice before, and averred he had never seen such weather as we were now favoured with—a circumstance which occurs, however, rather often in tremendous ascents. Far, far away beneath us lay the yet sparkling sea, and the rounded outline of the Isle of Man to westward. We could see the broad yellow fringe of Morecambe Bay, and, as Z declared, even a band of travellers crossing the sands of Lancaster; but I confess there was to me a somewhat filmy and indistinct appearance about these pilgrims. In the nearer circle lay fair Windermere, studded with many a glistening sail, and Coniston with its fine old guardian hill standing out grandly—a couch for the setting sun: Grasmere, too, and Easedale Tarn lying peacefully in its lone and lofty bed; and all these amidst a

mesh-work of gigantic mountains, of which Seawfell — the highest in England — Bowfell, and Skiddaw, were the chief. Close beside us, to northward, was Helvellyn, with its looking-glass, Grisedale Tarn; to the east of these lay Ullswater and the great Kirkstone range; while wood-besprinkled, peaceful Rydal filled up the foreground at our feet. Presently, their bright hues faded away from the lakes and lower fells, and the purple tints upon the western mountain-tops began to herald evening. The wind, too, was rising, and soon swept over the lofty and exposed ridge on which we stood with the chill of night, before we turned towards our shelter.

How beautiful our tent looked through the gloom, shining as it did — for the four carriage-lamps were lit within it — over the whole sleeping world like some fair star! The wind, however, had not permitted it to be expanded to its full dimensions; and though one of the porters had gone down with our animal home, there were still six persons to be accommodated under canvas, and there was little room to spare. Even in that bleak position, and with a north-easter rising, we were a great deal too hot inside, and we had to keep a fold

open as a ventilator. We ate our supper with such appetites as only mountain-air engenders; and afterwards, having kindled a fire outside, we got some warm water to mix with our gin, lit our cigars, and made ourselves comfortable: I am afraid, also, that we indulged, in that mountain solitude, in a few rubbers of whist. It was pleasant, Z had just discovered, to be thus enjoying all the advantages of civilisation in such a spot, while the wind was howling so vainly around our snug dwelling. We had all agreed to this observation; I had dealt, and was about turning up the trump, which, I grieve to say — since we did not play the game out — was an ace, when a frightful occurrence happened. In an instant, an unknown force hurled me from my kneeling posture prostrate upon the ground, and some monster at the same moment seemed to leap upon me with inconceivable violence. The whole of the party experienced a sensation precisely similar. The last storm-puff had carried our tent clean off its pegs.

For some minutes we were inextricably involved amidst guides, bottles, friends, cards, carriage-lamps, and cold meats, besides finding a great difficulty in breathing. I struggled as violently

as any, I do not doubt, and was the first to find myself about ankle-deep in the coldest water. The whole concern had rolled somehow into a morass, and it was matter of great good-fortune that it did so, instead of rolling into the fire which had been kindled immediately below it. When I had extricated myself, the other five were still struggling like eels in a net, and quarrelling among themselves for kicking one another. I rescued a lamp which was still burning, and then drew out poor Y by his left leg; he had fallen unluckily upon one of the other lamps, and had been a long time, poor fellow, putting it out with the small of his back. X had fallen face downwards into the morrass, and was now got to be the same colour all over with which he had partially bedaubed himself in the moss-bog. Z, who thought we had been struck with a thunderbolt, was speechless with terror; even the guides were very doubtful whether tent and all had really rolled down the precipice or not.

It was about one o'clock in the morning; there was no moon; and oh, how bitterly blew that mountain wind! What did Z mean, we demanded, by bringing us up into such a place as that, to

suffer such things as these? If it had not been for him, we should have been all of us snug asleep in our civilised beds by this time. Hark at that abominable canvas, cracking and straining, while the porters strive to set Humpty Dumpty up again! We never were more miserable in all our lives; but I am thankful to say Z was the most miserable. When, after an hour or so, things had been restored to their proper places, he dared not venture into the tent again, but patrolled it like a sentry for the remainder of the night, not daring to leave it, or to descend, for fear of losing his way upon the fell. Then, in the cold grey morning, a mist came over Fairfield, which presently resolved itself to drizzle, and then to rain. Instead of the fine panorama which we had so counted upon, we could not see above five yards in any direction; a slight inflammation in the eastern sky was all that betokened sunrise. More limp, discreditable-looking persons than X, Y, Z, and myself, when we came down from Fairfield, can scarcely be imagined. We did not thoroughly appreciate our miserable condition until somebody at Rydal offered to lend us umbrellas! He might as well have offered Mackintoshes to a family of otters!

Most of this I take from my notes written immediately after this celebrated feat, so that they are strictly reliable; but I have often heard my three friends, and have even caught myself, representing this our night on Fairfield as the most glorious in all our lives, "passed in close communion," as it was, "with nature in her grandest aspect, and with no trace of the living world in sight to mar the solemn emotions of the soul;" we painted the moonlight "lying cold and silvery on the mountain-tops;" the march of the red sunrise "driving before it the clouds of night along the eastern hills." So different, to even the most accurate of men, are the realities of a tremendous ascent from its reminiscences.

INGLEBOROUGH WITHIN.

Old Ingleborough, the Saxon Hill of Fire, is very rightfully one of the chief glories of Yorkshire.

Penyghent, Pendle, and Ingleborough,
Are the highest hills the county thorough,

is an ancient proverb of that boastful county ; and considering that the Cumberland and Westmorland mountains, half as high again, are within sight of all the three, it is a very creditable one. *Magna est veritas* is a quotation almost run to death, so true is it, but the thing which is popularly known as “a whopper,” is sometimes more tremendous still. Ingleborough is, as its inhabitants would say, at the tail end of the great northern hill district, and, although not such a fine fellow as his betters, holds his head well above the flat country, like a country-gentleman of consideration who has, at least, married into the peerage. It is naturally divided into “pastures” by

terraces or scars of limestone, which give to the whole hill the appearance of being fortified by a power even greater and more ancient than that of the Roman. *He* had his camp upon Ingleborough, we may be pretty sure, and dropped his money about — principally fourpenny-bits of the Constantine period — his brooches, his pottery, and his own bones, all over that neighbourhood, with his accustomed profusion. The Druids were there, of course, giving that artificial ringworm to the crown of the hill, which it was their duty and pleasure to effect upon all waste places. It had a beacon also, which can still be seen, and has often given warning to canny Yorkshire when canny Scotland was about to make a foray. There is a good deal of contention between these neighbours still, but after quite another sort of fashion, and diamond cuts diamond, instead of claymore broadsword. The northern folks arrive now quietly enough by the North-western Railway, and *Bradshaw* gives token of their approach instead of the beacon of old Ingleborough. But there is a grand look-out yet from the place where its ruins lie, two or three thousand feet above yon waste of waters: Lancaster tower and town; the little

caravans crossing the perilous sand-roads, which, in a few hours the sea will again claim for her own; smoke-pennoned steamer and white-sailed ship; curved bays, with little fishing-hamlets; belts of woodland with a glimmering star, vane — and very properly so — of some ivy-mantled village church; the mouths of three fair rivers, running down with many a curve and sweep from swarded uplands; on this side a sandbank or an island low in the sea, and on that, a group of mountains, the highest which old England has to boast of.

But, after all, our business is with Ingleborough Within. The whole district of Craven — the British Craigvan, country of rocks — of which this hill is lord, is honeycombed by innumerable earth-chambers. Ribblesdale, Wenningdale, Wharfedale, and half a score of other dales, named after their respective rivers, which curve so shallowly and broadly around the wooded limestone cliffs, are undermined and tunnelled for miles by the hand of nature and beneath them flow “sunless streams,” like Alph, the sacred river, none knows whither, and “measureless to man.” Often as we wander over the shoulders of Ingleborough, we hear voices

and gurglings from torrents which never find their way at all to the upper world, and from out one cavernous mouth in the hill Whernside, flows a stream which, in flood-time, washes out periodically old silver coins of the reign of Edward I., from who-knows-whose deep-hidden treasury. In Giggleswick Sears, whose name unhappily does not convey any idea of their real grandeur, is an ebbing and flowing well, of exceedingly irregular habits, having a flux and reflux, with a difference of from a few inches up to a foot and a-half, caused by some wondrous subterranean power, which miserable mathematicians explain by the principle of the double syphon. If you lay your ear to the ground at a certain spot in Ribblesdale, you will hear how the water comes down at Lodore in fairy-land, although not so much as a rivulet is to be seen outside of Robin Hood's Mill. Sometimes tremendous funnels, of two hundred feet in depth, lead by a very direct route, and one which would take no time at all to traverse, right down upon these mysterious streams, which are lit by them here and there, upon their dark road, as a tunnel by its shafts. Black and deep enough the water seems, as we peer over the edge of the "pot"

to look at it, nor does it make us at all ambitious of imitating that subterranean explorer, Sinbad, in trespassing on kelpie ground. Hellen Pot, which contains in it an underground water-fall of no less than forty feet, has been descended to the depth of three hundred and thirty feet, where the black river sinks into a quiet rotatory pool, and does not re-appear to mortal eye for more than a mile. Some few of these pots have fish in them: large dark trout abound in Hurtle Pot, where "the boggart," in rainy weather, is heard to threaten and fret, and are also found in less quantity in the chasm above it, though the upward force of the water is there so strong as to cast up stones of considerable size to the surface, and even on the bank.

There is a village under Ingleborough called Clapham, a great deal more picturesque than its metropolitan namesake; and from it the ascent of the hill is generally begun. At the neighbouring railway-station are to be read considerable puffs about his serene highness, and particularly concerning the structure of his internal arrangements, which cannot but be gratifying to any mountain. The tourist is entreated to come early, and to

spend a week in visiting Ingleborough and its caves.

A quarter of an hour's walk brings us to the hamlet, with its verdurous ravine and the fall issuing from the artificial lake above it; and half an hour afterwards, we arrive by a beautiful path which winds through larch-plantations, round the mountain's side, at the mouth of the cave. The entrance is wild and imposing, embowered in trees, and overhung with trailing foliage, and commands such a view of the deep ravine beneath it, and of the limestone shoulders of opposite Ingleborough, bare or half-draped in green, as would be fit enough to gladden the eye of an anchorite, did any chance to dwell here. When the tallow candles are lit, and the iron gates closed and locked upon us, we begin to wish ourselves outside again; and when we have stumbled over the sixty yards or so of rock-passage, which is the entire length of the old cave, and admired the few gloomy petrifications which gleam about in the dark vault as cheerfully as mouldy coffin-plates, we feel quite certain that we have had enough of caverns. That, at least, was our experience of Clapham Cave a score of years ago.

Up to that time, notwithstanding railways, and what is called the march of intellect, and in spite of what the newspapers had written against them, the water-fairies still dwelt under Ingleborough, in the beautiful palace they had inhabited ages before the Hengist Brothers were a firm, or Agricola was a husbandman, or even a child in arms. They knew, because they could hear us talking where their outer wall was thinnest next to the old cave, that foolish mortals paid a shilling a piece for looking at what had once been a cattle-stable of their own; but between it and them a partition had been built up some two or three thousand years before, of "calcareous concretion" upon our side, and of fretted crystal upon theirs; so that they feared no intrusion. Their manners were similar to those prevailing in European courts. The king spent a great deal of money in racing, and worse; the queen, good old creature, kept bees, and was content with eating bread and honey in her parlour, or, as is more likely in the house-keeper's room, out of the way, for her simple tastes were much reflected upon and ridiculed by her disrespectful children. The young prince had his boon-companions, and loved his rubber at skittles;

and the princess, his sister, amused herself with her organ — for she was very high-church — or reclined upon frosted silver cushions, while her maidens (who poor things, were kept standing all the time half out of the water) regaled her with stories of fabulous merman martyrs, till they brought quite a dryness into her eyes.

The palace itself was of extraordinary extent and splendour; the apartments, though many of them were very lofty, being indeed used in some instances as air-baths, never needed any support for their roofs, but the architect had built up a crystal pillar or two, here and there, for ornament, and in order to swell his bill, which, after all, he had great difficulty in getting settled by the late king (1240 A.M.), who never paid anybody except in his own I O U's, which were a sort of bank-note without the water-mark.

A statute was, however, erected to him by an admiring public in the Stalacite Gallery, where it is still standing; and as far as we can judge of a statute in the absence of the head and shoulders, a most excellent likeness.

It was in this very gallery that the princess was sitting with her attendants, modelling a little

Gothic church out of crystallised sugar, when the catastrophe occurred that drove all the fairy family out of their ancestral halls. The king was in his counting-house — which, to say the truth, was little better than a betting-office — counting out the money which he had won at a late spring-meeting; the queen was in her parlour, partaking of her usual refreshment; the princee was in the skittle-alley, knocking the pins about; when — “by the holy St. Hookem,” exclaimed the princess, “who was caught by the jaws, if the air isn’t coming in, and the water running out!” The princess was not often right when she was positive, but this time she spoke like a book. A servant of the gentleman who owns the ground had been pecking in the old cave at the “calcareous concretion” with a pickaxe, until he had pecked a hole in it!

Into what dismay and terror the royal household was thrown by this catastrophe, we can imagine, from the awful sounds which were heard from within at the time of the accident, but we shall not describe. We would rather be accurate than ever so poetical, and we confine ourselves only to those matters of which we have a certain

knowledge. We ourselves did not enter the palace until long after its inhabitants had left it, but not a thing has been removed from the place where it was found at the period of their flight. Immediately upon setting foot upon the fairy side of the old cave, we find ourselves in the Stalactite Gallery. There lie the frosted silver cushions, with their pillows and footstools of the same material, and having — as it seems to us — the very impression which the princess must have left upon them when she swam away with her maidens through what little water remained. There stands the glittering little gothic structure, only wanting the porch to complete it, and with a steeple of delicate spar which needs no peal of bells, inso-much as itself returns to the slightest touch, the sweetest bell-music imaginable. On the left hand, a little further on, are proofs of the house-wifely care of the good queen, in fleeces of silvery wool and the ebony spoke of a spinning-wheel; a turkey's head is all that remains of her well-ordered lardes; but her favourite bee-hive of frosted silver lies on its stalactite shelf, and her dark rich honey-combs are ranged beneath it. Beyond is the little counting-house,

with a watery abyss close by, into which the sporting monarch levanted upon the very first alarm, leaving in his haste his jockey-cap, also of frosted silver, upon the brink of it, where it now stands. A passage leads off, through water, to the left, as yet untrodden by mortal foot, up which the princess must have fled, for we can swear to her crystal slipper dropped at the entrance. Presently, we come to a water-fall, up which, when they were young, many a generation of the water-fairy family must have loved to leap, with that torso of the old bankrupt king beside it of which we have already spoken. Here, too, are crystal pillars separated in the centre, but still standing, the one half rising up from the marble floor to meet the other depending from the vaulted ceiling, — stalagmite and stalactite — which proves what little real necessity there was for their being erected. Besides these, crystallised air-plants — as they seem — hang everywhere from the roof, to which they are attached by a number of delicate silver icicles, which, when lighted up, have the prettiest and most magical effect.

And now we mortals have to stoop painfully for some distance along a depressed passage,

where the original inhabitants had, doubtless, no sort of difficulty in gliding, and by the side of the stream which still traverses the palace from end to end, at this time shallow enough, except in particular spots, and many feet below the marble water-line which marks upon its walls what its depth has been wont to be; a solemn, melancholy sound it ever makes, "low on the sand, and loud on the stone," as though it bewailed its banished indwellers.

At last, and two hundred and sixty feet from the old cave, we arrive at the Gothic hall, of enormous length, and with groined and lofty ceiling. At one end of it is the splendid throne of the queen-mother, glittering with diamonds, with an unexplored vista on the right, up which, it is probable, she escaped with her household goods; in the right centre is the magnificent organ, formed of thin plates of silver spar, whose notes, awakened even by a mortal hand, are still most ravishing; in the left, and opposite — where he built it, perhaps, for the purpose of annoying his sister at her anthems — is the prince's skittle-alley, dry, and with three of the pins still standing. On both sides of the hall are various chambers

filled with gleaming spar, transparent, and tapering perpendicularly from the summit, or branching into shrubberies of coral-work. From above depend numbers of sparkling chandeliers of stalactite, which are multiplied by mirrors of limpid water ingeniously placed beneath them; and below, there is a noiseless carpet of silver sand. A noble archway leads hence into the Alhambra Gallery, which, from the circumstance of it having been so long unpaid for, joined to that of its similarity to the Moorish court built by our own architect at Sydenham, bore the name of Owing Jones. The lofty roof, which is beautifully tessellated with intersecting lines of white marble, after extending, without a single pillar to support it, for a very great distance, suddenly sinks to a mere vaulted passage, between two and three feet in height, along which mortals have to crawl upon wooden clogs provided for that purpose. This is called the Cellar Gallery; but there is not a vestige of bin or bottle left to account for the designation; and this is the more to be regretted, as the travelling here upon all-fours is so laborious as to demand some kind of stimulant. When we have almost made up our minds to become semicircular for

the rest of our lives, the roof rises unexpectedly to an enormous altitude, and a man would be enabled to straighten himself though he should stand thirty feet in his shoes. We are now in what was evidently the great chamber of audience, and it is the last in the palace to which we shall be able to penetrate. A grand, stern justice-hall it is, surrounded with objects of awe rather than of beauty. Upon the huge sombre walls are written mysterious Runic characters; and from the roof hang dusky chandeliers of stalactite, which shed a doubtful light over the scene. We are now two thousand horizontal feet from the entrance of the palace, and half as many feet perpendicular from the upper air! It is indeed Ingleborough Within, and yet we have probably not seen one-tenth of the wonders of this fairy home. A low archway leads from the hall into water, and darkness, and space, along which adventurous mortals have swum and struggled for several hundred yards further, and still have been far from finding the places whither the banished race have betaken themselves. That they are within there, somewhere, is all we must be content to know.

And now we must return along the splendid

succession of hall and corridor, into daylight. The sun gleams brightly enough upon herb and leaf, upon rock and downland, but it meets with no such glittering response as our homely candles have been evoking from stalactite and spar. This poor dull earth of ours cannot stand comparison with fairy-land ! Ah, who to see the rugged face of that bluff old Yorkshire mountain, would dream of the rich heart-chambers that lie in Ingleborough Within ?



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